UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
19th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 27 October 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KRENKEL (Austria)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/47/SR.19
16 November 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

/...

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (A/47/38; A/47/82-S/23512; A/47/88-S/23563; A/47/340, 368, 377, 391, 508 and 564)

1. The CHAIRMAN, after listing the documents before the Committee under agenda item 94, invited the first speaker to make an introductory statement.

2. Mrs. MESLEM (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that, while consideration of the question of the advancement of women might seem a routine matter, since it was a field in which the United Nations had made steady though slow progress, there had been much talk of women in 1992 and the resurgence of democracy, in which women had had an active role, had been an important event. She warned that, after committing themselves fully to change, women might yet find themselves robbed of their rights and achievements, as had happened so often before. She expressed the hope that massive participation by women in elections would bring about the changes that they advocated and help to create a more open and moral society. In that connection, consideration of the question of the advancement of women was an essential contribution to the international community's efforts to change a world dominated by stereotypes and backward-looking models.

3. The Committee had before it three reports. The report on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/47/368) indicated that the number of States that were parties to the Convention had reached 119, as compared with 106 the previous year. However, that represented only a limited step forward since the new States Parties were, in fact, the successors of federations which had broken up. Of the 20 States admitted to the United Nations since the previous report, only four had acceded to the Convention. In terms of percentages, therefore, there had been a step backwards. Since the Convention was a major part of the human rights machinery, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, together with their secretariat, the Division for the Advancement of Women, had tried hard to have the question of women's enjoyment of their fundamental rights placed on the agenda of the World Conference on Human Rights to be held in Vienna. The matter would be taken up again at the Committee's next session in January, and considered by the Commission pursuant to resolution 1992/20 of the Economic and Social Council.

4. She drew attention to general recommendation 19 (1992) on violence against women, in the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/47/38). The recommendation contained a number of in-depth analyses and proposed detailed and specific measures, thus illustrating the way in which the Committee sought to carry out the responsibilities conferred upon it by the Convention. It also supplemented the work of the Commission on the Status of Women which was currently engaged in preparing an international instrument on the elimination of violence

(Mrs. Meslem)

against women, the final stage in the efforts undertaken in that field since 1975, during International Women's Year. In September, the Commission had considered a draft declaration prepared by an intersessional working group, on the elimination of violence against women, with a view to submitting it to its 1993 session and having it adopted by the General Assembly.

5. She stressed the importance of the draft declaration, which contained a definition of violence against women in the context of international law and specific proposals for preventing and eradicating such violence. The report on the Convention (A/47/368), which was technical in nature, should be read in the context of the report submitted at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, which contained information on a number of matters relating to the implementation of the Convention.

6. The report on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 (A/47/377) was divided into two sections. The first concerned the priority themes to be considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-seventh session, in March 1993. The theme of equality implied increased awareness by women of their rights. Accordingly, the report examined means of encouraging women to exercise the rights conferred upon them by the human rights instruments already adopted. In regard to development, the priority theme concerned the elimination of extreme poverty, which affected women disproportionately. A study was under way of how poverty was transmitted from generation to generation and of ways of breaking the cycle, including through action by the government. The capacity of the public sector to solve economic and social problems had been strongly disputed in recent years, but there was also concern that market forces, instead of solving the problem of extreme poverty, in fact helped to perpetuate it. The difficulty was to establish a link between the public sector's capacity for regulation and long-term investment and the functioning of the market and between that capacity and the results, which were difficult to quantify, of voluntary efforts by the community. The third priority theme concerned women's place in the peace process. Women were virtually excluded from it, being neither parties to the decisions on war and peace, nor involved in their implementation. It was a field in which stereotypes were very clear cut. However, the desire of women to contribute to peace and their skills in that field would enrich the process considerably, as was already being seen in the active part played by women in such varied circumstances as the Middle East peace talks and the United Nations peace-keeping operations in Angola and South Africa. The report also considered the question of women in the armed forces and the contribution they could make if they enjoyed equality in that field.

7. The second section of the report (A/47/377) included information on the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, in the context of the regular work programme of the Commission on the Status of Women. The report noted that a statement of programme budget implications had been drawn up which, if adopted by the Assembly, would mean that during the coming

/...

(Mrs. Meslem)

biennium the World Conference would have at its disposal resources from the regular budget comparable to those enjoyed by most other world conferences.

8. The success of the Conference would depend on the quality of national and regional preparations and it was important for Governments and non-governmental organizations to take advantage of the preparatory period in order to consider what they hoped to accomplish. The Commission had begun to outline a Platform for Action which it hoped the Conference would adopt and for which guidelines had been laid down in its resolutions 35/4 and 36/8. Resolution 35/4 placed special emphasis on the need to enhance awareness of women's rights under international conventions and national law, to increase the proportion of women involved in decision-making, to study the reasons why women did not enjoy the same social conditions as men, and to establish institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. In resolution 36/8, the Commission called for the Platform for Action to take account of the impact of the changes that had occurred in the world on the status of women, the importance of integrating gender perspectives in policy-making, the need to give priority to the situation of rural women, and the differences in priorities among regions. The role of women in decision-making and the role of women entrepreneurs in mobilizing resources and promoting development should also be considered at each regional conference.

9. The Division for the Advancement of Women had been entrusted with the task of drawing up the preliminary draft Platform for Action and had held consultations with the regional commissions, other Secretariat services and the specialized agencies. It would take account of the debates on the question held in the Third Committee during the current session.

10. Ms. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)) said that women had played little, if any, part in the creation of the major international institutions. However, the time had come to draw on the talents of all in order to bring about, through a more innovative approach, the changes needed in a world where interdependence was an inescapable fact of life. The prospects for a better future lay in the hands of women. Women were finally taking their place in public life and demonstrating that there was really no such thing as women's issues, but that all issues were of concern to women.

11. The work of UNIFEM consisted mainly of establishing links between women at local level and the decision-making process which shaped their future at national level. On the one hand, the Fund provided direct support for small-scale but creative women's initiatives, while on the other it encouraged innovative programmes to remove the obstacles hindering full participation by women at all levels.

12. The activities undertaken in the regions offered concrete examples of that dual approach. Many African countries were racked by political conflict or ravaged by drought. At present, one in three of the world's refugees was African and 80 per cent of African refugees or displaced persons were women

/...

(Ms. Capeling-Alakija)

and children. In Liberia, UNIFEM had therefore concentrated on addressing the specific needs of women refugees, notably by training them in skills which would enable them to earn a living not only in their current circumstances, but also on their subsequent return to their country of origin.

13. In Latin America and the Caribbean, women themselves had brought to the Fund's attention vivid examples of how domestic and community violence had blocked their full participation in development. In Venezuela, a project had been introduced to sensitize police officers who dealt with cases of sexual and domestic violence. The pilot scheme had been extended to all members of the police academy. Other activities sought to encourage the exchange of information in the field and to document the extent of the problem. In order to mobilize funds for such initiatives, UNIFEM was holding an international seminar in cooperation with the Dutch Government to provide a forum for dialogue among policy makers, donors and women who had developed effective approaches to reducing violence.

14. In southern Asia, UNIFEM had held a series of national summits on the environment for peasant women in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, allowing them to voice their concerns regarding the impact of environmental problems on their daily lives and to put forward proposals. Subsequently, three of the peasant women had attended the Earth Summit in Rio. They would shortly be reporting on the Summit at follow-up meetings with women's non-governmental organizations, planners, policy makers and researchers, where strategies would be developed to implement the decisions taken in Rio.

15. In that regard, it was worth remembering that in 1989 the initial resolution on the Rio Conference made no reference to women whatsoever. Women throughout the world had rallied to the cause and succeeded in securing participation in the preparations. In addition, an important decision had been adopted aimed at including a global goal in Agenda 21 promoting the effective participation of women in knowledge generation, decision-making, and management at local, national, regional and international levels. UNIFEM had also financed the post of special advisor on women, environment and development in the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. As a result, women's concerns had been integrated into Agenda 21, which included several recommendations for the education and training of women.

16. In early November, the General Assembly would need to take decisions concerning the establishment of new institutions to monitor the implementation of the agreements made at Rio. It was necessary to ensure that women were equitably represented in those institutions at all levels. Women must have opportunities to sit on the new Commission on Sustainable Development and its high-level advisory board and to occupy senior positions in the Commission's permanent secretariat.

17. As the Fund's programmes were possible only because of the generosity of its donors, she thanked the Governments of developing and industrialized

/...

(Ms. Capeling-Alakija)

countries which continued to make contributions to the Fund despite the prevailing economic crisis, as well as the National Committees for UNIFEM, non-governmental organizations and international women's organizations. She also thanked the private sector for its support.

18. Ms. Julie Andrews, whom the Secretary-General had appointed as the Fund's Goodwill Ambassador in March 1992, had already visited Jordan and Senegal in that capacity. In November, Ms. Andrews would be in Japan to promote the Fund's work and to launch the Japanese National Committee for UNIFEM.

19. Lastly, she wished to thank the women's networks around the world which had been the source of many of the Fund's activities. The Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in 1995, would be an opportunity for the international women's movement to show that it was equal to the particular challenge of confronting an interdependent world.

20. Ms. HABACHY (Focal Point for Women in the Office of the Director of Personnel in the Secretariat), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/47/508), said that, as at 30 June 1992, women occupied 30.6 per cent of the posts subject to geographical distribution, as compared with 29.2 per cent in June 1991, which represented an increase of 1.4 per cent. There were no women at the Under-Secretary-General level, only one at the Assistant Secretary-General level and, out of a total of 80 staff members at the D-2 level, women still numbered only 10. However, there were 26 women at the D-1 level, as compared with only 20 one year earlier. With women occupying slightly more than 10 per cent of posts at the D-level and above, the Organization was still a long way from the target of 25 per cent by 1995 which had been set by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, 87 women had been promoted at the the P-2 to D-1 levels during the period from July 1991 to June 1992, as compared with 46 during the previous 12-month period. For men, the figures were 98 and 96, respectively. Women's share of all promotions (47 per cent) exceeded the share of posts subject to geographical distribution which were held by women (30.6 per cent). With regard to recruitment, 50 women, or 39.1 per cent of the total, had been recruited during the period from July 1991 to June 1992.

21. Moreover, with regard to the secretarial occupation, a restructuring review of jobs had been carried out which had resulted in an increase in the numbers of higher level posts (by about 60), particularly at the G-5 level. Lastly, circulars concerning procedures to deal fairly and firmly with cases of alleged sexual harassment in the Secretariat would be issued shortly. The achievement of the goals set, which had been made more difficult by restructuring and the temporary ban on recruitment, would require intensified efforts.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
20th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 28 October 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. KRENKEL	(Austria)
later:	Mr. DEKANY (Vice-Chairman)	(Hungary)
later:	Mr. KRENKEL (Chairman)	(Austria)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (*continued*)

AGENDA ITEM 91: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/47/SR.20
6 November 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/47/38, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/88-S/23563, A/47/340, 368, 377, 391, 508 and 564)

1. Ms. BOARDMAN (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community said that the advancement of women continued to be given high priority within the Community, as was demonstrated by several action programmes aimed at addressing discrimination against women in all its forms. One such programme was the Third Medium-Term Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women, which built on previous programmes implemented in the 1980s. The Action Programme highlighted the implementation and development of a legal framework, the integration of women into the labour market and the improvement of the overall status of women in society. The Main Funding initiative under the Action Programme was the new opportunities for women intitiative, which had three main components: creation of small businesses and cooperatives run by women; guidance, advice and training; and complementary measures such as child care. Other programmes offered various forms of training for women, much of which was specifically aimed at socially disadvantaged women and women from ethnic minority groups.

2. The Twelve believed that it was important to facilitate participation in the labour market by parents with dependent children. In March 1992, the European Council of Ministers had adopted a recommendation on child care which identified four key issues: child care, parental leave, workplace organization and equitable sharing of occupational and domestic responsibilities. While pregnant women in the European Community already enjoyed a high standard of health and safety protection at work, a recently-adopted directive on pregnant workers set a number of minimum standards to enhance that protection. Those included a minimum of 14 weeks' paid maternity leave, protection against dismissal on grounds of pregnancy, paid time off for antenatal care and an obligation for employers to offer pregnant workers suitable protection against risks. The Council had also endorsed broad principles on a code of practice for combating sexual harassment at work.

3. The Twelve welcomed the convening of the Fourth World Conference on Women, which would give impetus to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and allow the international community to demonstrate its political will to re-establish the advancement of women as a global priority. Governments had an important role to play in improving the status of women and in eliminating structural imbalances. The role of non-governmental organizations, individual women and the media was equally indispensable. Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council must be allowed unrestricted access to the Conference and its preparatory process.

4. The Twelve welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

and urged those States which had not yet done so to ratify the Convention. They supported the proposal to extend the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women until the Committee cleared the backlog of reports. They also supported the request of the Commission on the Status of Women to ensure that the issues of women in development and integration of women in development programmes remained an integral part of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

5. The status of women had to be improved if the development targets set at recent international meetings were to be met. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) were doing important work in that connection. In the meantime, the question of overcoming the barriers to a greater participation by women in public life and decision-making should be examined.

6. One of the major obstacles to women's advancement identified in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies was violence against women. That problem and the situation of women in other vulnerable groups required continued attention.

7. With regard to the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat, the Twelve would like to see a higher overall proportion of women in the Secretariat and more women in top United Nations posts. They hoped that the new post of a Focal Point for Women in the Office of Human Resources Management would help to meet that objective.

8. Lastly, the Twelve wished to underline the need to place the consideration of women's issues in the mainstream. In that connection, they reaffirmed their commitment to give attention to the issue of equal opportunities at all policy-making levels and to take the necessary measures to ensure the advancement of women and contribute to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies.

9. Ms. GILES (Australia) stressed the importance of improving the status of women and said that equality of opportunity was specifically linked to the full participation of women in the decision-making process. The Secretariat had been asked by Member States to reflect equality of employment opportunities for women in its personnel policies. The work environment should also be free of harassment and conducive to women's advancement.

10. Because of the backlog of reports awaiting consideration by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, her delegation supported the proposal to extend the duration of the Committee's sessions to three weeks. Given the extremely large number of reservations entered to the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, it urged States which had significant reservations to review them periodically and all States which had not yet ratified the Convention to do so. It also

(Ms. Giles, Australia)

encouraged the newly emerging States to review their policies when creating and restructuring institutions, in order to ensure that they reflected the principles enshrined in the Convention.

11. The resolution on preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women had a been a major achievement of the thirty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Australia intended to use the preparatory process as a vehicle for achieving the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies.

12. Her Government supported the draft declaration on the elimination of violence against women prepared by the intersessional Working Group of the Commission on the Status of Women, which recognized the fundamental need to ensure that women were not subjected to violence. Australia was currently implementing policies to demonstrate that violence against women was wholly unjustifiable and unacceptable under any circumstances. The draft declaration represented both a broad consensus and a genuine commitment to eliminating one of the most insidious forms of discrimination against women.

13. Two other issues, namely the proposed summit for social development and the establishment of the new Commission on Sustainable Development, were also intrinsically linked to the status of women. Social issues were a necessary component of peace and development. Moreover, if women were excluded from the development process at any level, the opportunity to achieve sustainable development or an ecologically sustainable environment would be needlessly limited. The most efficient approach was one which provided a powerful policy tool for achieving the desired outcome across a range of objectives. A social, cultural and economic environment which promoted and nurtured everyone and offered equal opportunities in society could be created only by implementing good and intelligent public policy. Both the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies provided a sound policy framework which was dependent not only on resource levels but also on a sincere commitment to eliminating past discrimination and promoting equal opportunity. It was clearly in the interest of society to enhance the status of women. Her delegation therefore strongly supported the integrated policy approach being applied to the priority themes, which would help make the social, cultural and economic environment more sensitive to women's needs, roles, achievements and capabilities.

14. The priority themes to be tackled at the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women would provide a policy framework for dealing with the increasingly serious problem posed by the feminization of poverty. Other forums would also provide opportunities for discussing themes such as equality, the role of women in the peace process and the effectiveness of women operating under the auspices of United Nations peace initiatives.

15. Mrs. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso) said that since the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in 1985, slow but positive progress had been made

(Mrs. Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso)

in improving the status of women. There was widespread recognition that women must participate in the development process. Development programmes must include women in education, health and economic activities. Much remained to be done to liberate women, particularly rural women, from traditional practices which impeded their economic and social emancipation. In that connection, her delegation welcomed the Geneva Declaration for Rural Women, which should have a considerable impact on the advancement of rural women. Any programme for sustainable development must also focus on women and the environment. It was regrettable, therefore, that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) had not adequately addressed that aspect. Her delegation welcomed the activities undertaken by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in the area of environmental protection, and its women, environment and development programme for disadvantaged women in developing countries.

16. Turning to the report on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/47/508), her delegation welcomed the increase in the number of women in the Secretariat and the promotions they had received, but was concerned that the targets set for 1995 would not be achieved. The disproportion was particularly pronounced in senior-level posts.

17. Burkina Faso fully supported the programmes of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). In view of the important role it played, the Institute should receive more support from the United Nations in the form of financing other than voluntary contributions.

18. The discriminatory practice of excision, which affected 80 million women on the African continent, endangered the physical and mental health of girls and women and in most cases was carried out without the most basic hygienic measures. In that connection, her delegation welcomed Commission of Human Rights decision 1992/109 on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children. In Burkina Faso, the National Committee to Combat the Practice of Excision was pursuing strategies aimed at eliminating the practice and conducted educational and research activities in that area.

19. The forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights must take full account of the rights of women at all stages of its work. Questions relating to women must be part of the discussions on civil, social and economic rights. Violence against women must be recognized as a violation of human rights; and immediate steps must be taken to deal with that systematic disregard for the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

20. Her delegation welcomed the consideration of preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of Commission of the Status of Women resolution 36/8 concerning the organization of the Conference. The priority themes to be considered by the Commission at its next session must be analysed in depth at both the national and the international level. Women must be made more aware of their basic rights, particularly with regard to marriage, children, separation, divorce, property and inheritance. In-depth

/...

(Mrs. Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso)

consideration should be given to ways of integrating in national development planning, the concerns of women living in extreme poverty. There was also a need to recommend that Governments and development agencies should consider and integrate women in all their programmes. The role of women in promoting the peace process should also be defined.

21. Women played a major role in development in Burkina Faso. They occupied senior posts in a number of fields and were also active in political life. A number of ministerial posts were held by women. A bank had been opened to provide loans to women working in the informal sector. Women were increasingly becoming true partners in the development process, although their role still needed to be strengthened.

22. Mr. Dekany (Hungary), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

23. Mrs. KABA CAMARA (Côte d'Ivoire) said that discrimination against women and social, political and economic inequality continued despite the efforts of the past two decades. Nevertheless, increased awareness at all levels of the need to change attitudes towards women was strengthening the determination to accelerate the liberation of women. The fourth World Conference on Women to be held in 1995 could make a turning point in the lives of women throughout the world. The agenda proposed for the Conference would enable each region to consider its own specific problems and would promote as broad a discussion as possible of all aspects of the advancement of women. Concrete, achievable and measurable goals must be established in order to accelerate equality by the year 2000.

24. The working documents for the Conference should include the conclusions reached at various United Nations conferences held in recent years. The status of women must also be considered within the context of the World Conference on Human Rights to be held in 1993 and the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994. The conclusions reached at the Fourth World Conference on Women should be reaffirmed by the world summit for social development.

25. The World Conference on Human Rights should consider the question of discrimination against women and analyse the reasons why human rights were applied differently for men and women. It would be useful if the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) submitted its report for consideration at that Conference. The Conference on Human Rights should draw attention to the fact that, although rights had been laid down in national legislation, they were not reflected in actions and attitudes. Illiteracy, tradition, ignorance and social and family burdens perpetuated inequality between men and women, particularly with regard to access to education and employment.

26. The report on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/47/508) demonstrated that, while tangible progress had been made in recruiting women in general, the rate of promotion of women to senior posts

/...

(Mrs. Kaba Camara, Côte d'Ivoire)

remained low. African women were still underrepresented, particularly in decision-making posts. It was necessary to promote the training of women in technical disciplines in order to increase the number of women candidates for posts in the specialized agencies. Table 11 in the report demonstrated that many United Nations agencies had yet to take specific measures to achieve the goals set. Those agencies should be encouraged to do so by producing a full report on the situation of women in secretariats system-wide.

27. Referring to the International Conference on Population and Development to take place in 1994, she stressed that women should be at the centre of any strategy concerning population growth and human resources. Family planning was practised only in families where women were literate. Educated women had fewer children, who in turn were healthier and better educated. A higher level of instruction for women promoted lower fertility and infant mortality rates, and slower population growth. Steps must also be taken to enable women to carry out fully their role in preserving the environment and ensuring sustainable development. The world summit for social development in 1995 should reaffirm the conclusions reached at the Fourth World Conference on Women and support the measures to be adopted for integrating women in development.

28. In a society created and controlled by men, it was not easy for women to compete with men for political power. It was realistic, however, for them to introduce education, health, employment and public information policies that would allow for the progressive, but inevitable, integration of women in development. All development organizations should incorporate women's issues in the projects they financed. She commended the World Bank's increased attention to the consequences that structural adjustment programmes had for the most vulnerable population groups, including women, and its efforts to rectify those adverse effects by encouraging projects for women.

29. Her delegation was grateful to UNIFEM for supporting women in Africa and helping increase their participation in development. In the current economic crisis, African women faced intractable problems. Rural women did most of the farming, marketed crops, took care of the family and reared the children. UNIFEM could help alleviate women's daily workload and increase their incomes by encouraging them to form cooperatives. The creation of child care centres would greatly assist working women in cities and in rural areas, since motherhood was one of the factors that hindered women's competitiveness.

30. The most vulnerable women - elderly women, disabled women, women refugees and women living below the poverty level - also needed help. A society that sacrificed its women sacrificed its future, for women were the guardians of the spiritual and moral values that were passed on from generation to generation. Women brought harmony, love and understanding to the home. By teaching moral values, women helped steer children away from delinquency, drugs, crime and social marginalization.

/...

31. Mrs. MANNEN (Netherlands) said that it was time to implement the Forward-looking Strategies adopted at Nairobi in 1985. Despite the work done by the women's movement in identifying the obstacles women faced and the strategies needed, only a small number of women were participating in decision-making processes, even within the United Nations.

32. She urged the Secretariat to increase the number of women at the senior policy level, starting with the goal of having 35 per cent of posts subject to geographical distribution filled by women and aiming ultimately at proportional participation by qualified men and women by 1995. The creation of national rosters for women candidates could further the recruitment of women within the Secretariat. Geographical representation was as important as fair representation of both sexes.

33. She commended the Commission on the Status of Women for having consulted international women's organizations on preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held at Beijing in 1995. Her delegation was concerned about the level of funding and the low priority so far accorded to the 1995 Conference. It also felt it was important that individual women should have access to the forum of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), that a link should be established between the NGO forum and the Conference, that the media should have free access to the Conference and the NGO forum, that funds should be made available for all women, especially women from developing countries, to enable them to participate in the regional meetings and in the NGO forum and that specialist NGOs without consultative status should be allowed to participate in the Conference. Governments should include contributions from the grass-roots level in their national preparations for the Conference.

34. Steps should be taken to review the budget of the unit responsible for granting consultative status to specialized NGOs seeking to participate in the Conference, which was overworked and understaffed. The unit was currently unable to provide NGOs with the information they required.

35. Since violence against women was not referred to explicitly in existing international human rights instruments, there was a need to highlight that issue. General recommendation 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), requesting States parties to include information on violence against women in their national reports, was a promising step in that direction. Special attention should be paid to specific groups of women, such as refugee women, who were especially vulnerable to violence. Violence against women was a matter of world-wide concern and international action should be taken to eliminate it.

36. In many countries, the law did not protect women from the violence committed by Government officials. Governments were responsible for implementing paragraph 231 of the forward-looking strategies, on the elimination of violence against women and children, and for observing international standards relating to fundamental human rights, an obligation

/...

(Mrs. Mannen, Netherlands)

which included combating violence against women. The World Conference on Human Rights should deal with women's rights in a comprehensive manner. Every item on its agenda should be considered in the light of its applicability to women. Close cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women, CEDAW and the Commission on Human Rights was required to that end.

37. The position of older women continued to be of concern. Women in both the industrialized countries and the developing world suffered from systematic inequality and gender discrimination, to which age discrimination was often added as they grew older. CEDAW should take the lead among United Nations bodies in monitoring human rights and should give particular attention to discrimination based on age when reviewing national reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

38. The importance of economic independence for women should be stressed in order to prevent the same problems from occurring in each generation. In the Netherlands, special measures had been adopted in the fields of education, employment, health care and leisure to improve younger women's chances of obtaining better jobs and to encourage them to continue working while having children. Another target of her country's emancipation policy was that men should take on household tasks and child care to a greater extent, in order to create more opportunities for women. To that end, boys were being encouraged to look after themselves.

39. The Women's Action Agenda 21, adopted at the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet held at Miami in 1991, should be implemented worldwide. Her delegation urged the General Assembly to include the Women's Action Agenda 21 in the follow-up debate to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Equal participation by women in environmental management and in policy preparation was essential if sustainable development was to be achieved.

40. Racism was a major obstacle to peace and delayed the development of the unlimited potential of its victims. National education programmes which emphasized the values of tolerance, appreciation for other cultures and respect for differences were an important step towards the elimination of racism. Women should play a crucial role in the elimination of racism both at home and in the workplace.

41. Mrs. LUHULIMA (Indonesia) said that at the Tenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-aligned Countries, recognition had been given to the importance of equal access for women to all aspects of development activities, in particular, education and training, health care, employment and the use of new technologies. The Conference had urged that all necessary steps should be taken to develop a political, economic, social and cultural environment conducive to the full integration of women in sustainable development processess.

/...

(Mrs. Luhulima, Indonesia)

42. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries was committed to the success of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing. Activities related to the Conference and to evaluating compliance with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies should be promoted. Her delegation commended the progress made by the Commission on the Status of Women as the preparatory body for the 1995 Conference. Indonesia was hosting a regional conference in preparation for the Conference which would discuss three main issues - women and social development, women and economic development and the empowerment of women.

43. In its resolution 36/8, the Commission on the Status of Women had requested that priority be given to the situation of rural women. Indonesia's success in drastically reducing the incidence of poverty from 60 per cent in the 1970s to 15 per cent in 1990, achieving self-sufficiency in rice and overcoming the impact of global economic crisis owed much to the active participation of women and to appropriate programme policy intervention. Those achievements had contributed to improving the living conditions of rural women. The economic empowerment of rural women must be achieved through combined economic, social, political and legal actions. Indonesia had promoted the organization of rural women into self-help groups such as women farmers' groups, cooperatives and legal awareness groups. The Government had assisted by linking women's self-help groups with banks that provided special credits for poor women who could not offer collateral and by improving women's access to training in non-traditional skills and agricultural technology.

44. Her delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/47/377, which stressed, inter alia, the importance of making both men and women aware of the laws that affected women most, emphasizing the available legal remedies and how to use them. In Indonesia, legal literacy for women was an integral part of the national literacy programme. A legal awareness campaign on women's rights and the equal rights of men and women used question and answer groups and discussions on marriage law, labour law, property rights and environmental law. Increasing efforts were also being made to provide information to the community on the importance of equality between men and women in the family and in the community at large.

45. As indicated in the report in document A/47/377, greater attention needed to be given to making development planning more responsive to gender. The proposal that the gender dimensions of development should be the keystone of the 1994 update of the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development would prove useful to policy-making activities. Gender-responsive planning was essential for the economic empowerment of women, especially poor women, and should be followed up by the well-planned mobilization of national and local resources.

46. Her delegation welcomed the initiatives taken by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) as described in document A/47/340. The Fund's advocacy role had helped Member States bring women more effectively

/...

into the mainstream of development. Women's issues should be addressed at the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development and the proposed world summit for social development.

47. Mr. CHIARADIA (Argentina), speaking on behalf of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela and his own country, said that those countries were working at both the national and the international level to promote recognition of the leading role of women. It was an obvious corollary to the principle of respect for individual rights that men and women should have equal opportunities, in the context of the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, and political rights. There was, nevertheless, almost systematic inequality between the sexes with regard to the implementation of those rights, a situation exacerbated by the gap that existed between legal provisions and actual practice. To counteract that tendency, countries must incorporate international norms prohibiting sex discrimination against women into their domestic laws. They must also endeavour to ensure the full application of existing laws through public awareness campaigns and by providing adequate legal assistance.

48. The advancement of women was closely linked to other priority items on the international agenda. Given full equality, women would be at once major contributors to and major beneficiaries of advances in social, economic and political life. He strongly advocated women's participation in decision-making processes at the regional, national and international levels. Yet before they could claim their rightful place in society, women needed education and training in order to rise above the deteriorating economic conditions in which they were often trapped. In that connection, any effort to modify women's participation in the informal economic sector should ensure that women received adequate remuneration and the necessary social services.

49. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was an important means of promoting the rights of women and their full participation in all aspects of society. Violence in any form against women was not only one of the major obstacles to equality but also a fundamental violation of human rights. In that connection, he welcomed the successful efforts of the inter-sessional working group on violence against women established to draft a declaration on that issue.

50. Measures to advance the status of women were relevant throughout a woman's lifetime and had to be adapted to her changing needs. The education, training and health of young women had a direct effect on their ability to contribute to society at a later stage. At maturity, women represented important human resources, a fact which should be taken into consideration in policy planning.

51. The valuable work being done by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) included a project on women

/...

(Mr. Chiaradia, Argentina)

as recipients and producers of information; research, in conjuction with UNIFEM and the United Nations Statistical Office, on the gender analysis of low-technology mining industries; projects to train rural women and to highlight women's contribution to the environment; and statistical evaluations of women's non-remunerated contribution to development and of the role of elderly women.

52. The Commission on the Status of Women had made substantial progress in preparing for the Fourth World Conference on Women, which would provide an ideal opportunity for revitalizing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The early appointment of a Secretary-General of the Conference, the mobilization of adequate resources and the dissemination of information on the preparatory process and the conference itself were all important issues. The Division for the Advancement of Women also needed to be strengthened so that it could meet the demand for documents for the Conference.

53. Lastly, he wished to emphasize the importance of paying particular attention, during the restructuring of the Secretariat, to the question of the advancement of women, an issue which should also rank high on the agendas of the various international meetings to be held before the Fourth World Conference on Women.

54. Mr. Krenkel (Austria) resumed the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 91: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/C.3/47/L.9/Rev.1, L.12, L.2, L.5, L.6 and L.8)

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.9/Rev.1

55. Mr. RAVEN (United Kingdom), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.9/Rev.1 whose sponsors had been joined by Albania and Paraguay, said that the draft resolution incorporated the following amendments made to draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.9: the words "ethnic cleansing" in the title had been placed between inverted commas; the word "religion" had been inserted between the words "colour" and "or ethnic origin" in the third preambular paragraph, as proposed by the delegation of Turkey; a seventh and eighth preambular paragraph had been added; and the word "responsible" in the English version of paragraph 4 had been changed to "accountable".

56. Three issues were still under discussion: the wording of the seventh preambular paragraph; whether to replace the word "recalling" in the eighth preambular paragraph with "reaffirming", an amendment proposed by the delegation of Turkey and likely to win approval; and an overall reformulation of paragraph 4.

/...

A/C.3/47/L.12: proposed amendments to draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.9

57. Mr. BURCUOǦLU (Turkey) said that in formulating its proposals, his delegation had taken into consideration the origin of the expression "ethnic cleansing", its use in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and the relevant statements made in the Third Committee. As proposed, the new version of the draft resolution would clearly acknowledge its point of departure, rest on a sound basis and do justice to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

58. As the Committee had just been informed, Turkey's proposal to replace, in the eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.9/Rev.1, the word "recalling" with "reaffirming" was likely to be accepted. If so, his delegation was prepared to withdraw its third proposed amendment, namely, the insertion in the sixth preambular paragraph, after the words "hatred and violence", of the phrase "whose most recent manifestations have become evident in Bosnia and Herzegovina".

59. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to draft decision A/C.3/47/L.2 and draft resolutions A/C.3/47/L.5, L.6 and L.8, none of which had programme budget implications.

Draft decision A/C.3/47/L.2

60. Draft decision A/C.3/47/L.2 was adopted.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.5

61. The CHAIRMAN said that Bahrain, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Mauritania and Nicaragua should be added to the list of sponsors and that the Bahamas should be removed from it.

62. Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.5 was adopted.

63. Ms. MANIMEKALAI (India) said that the fact that her delegation had joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.5 was without prejudice to its position with regard to the International Covenants on Human Rights and the relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights. In that connection, her Government had declared that the words "the right of self-determination", as contained in article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, applied only to peoples under foreign domination and not to sovereign independent States or to a section of a people or nation.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.6

64. The CHAIRMAN said that Botswana, Romania, Rwanda and Senegal should be added to the list of sponsors.

65. Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.6 was adopted.

/...

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.8

66. The CHAIRMAN said that Germany, Iceland, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Pakistan and Romania should be added to the list of sponsors.

67. Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.8 was adopted.

68. Mr. ASAHI (Japan), explaining his delegation's position on resolutions A/C.3/47/L.6 and L.8, said that while his Government was not a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, it was dedicated to that cause and firmly committed to international efforts to promote human rights and, to that end, had made substantial contributions to the Trust Fund for the Programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. Nevertheless, his delegation maintained its reservations to resolutions A/C.3/47/L.6 and L.8 for the reasons stated during the general debate on item 91.

69. Mr. KUEHL (United States of America), explaining his delegation's position on resolutions A/C.3/47/L.6 and L.8, said that his Government was not a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Drawing attention to the third preambular paragraph of resolution A/C.3/47/L.6 and the eighth preambular paragraph of resolution A/C.3/47/L.8, he noted that, in the view of his Government, the adoption of the two resolutions was without prejudice to the financial references contained in those two paragraphs.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
21st meeting
held on
Thursday, 29 October 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KRENKEL (Austria)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued)

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/47/SR.21
24 November 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

/...

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/47/38, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/88-S/23563, A/47/340, 368, 377, 391, 508 and 564)

1. Mr. KONIG (Observer for the European Community), explaining that his statement was additional to that given by the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that, in the context of its third medium-term action programme, the Commission of the European Communities had continued its work aimed at consolidating the legal framework with regard to equal opportunities for men and women. In October 1992, it had therefore adopted a European Council directive on improving the protection and health of pregnant women at work, women who had recently given birth and women who were breast-feeding. In November 1992, it had also adopted a recommendation and code of practice on the protection of the dignity of women and men at work, which dealt in particular with the problem of combating sexual harassment, while the European Council itself had adopted a declaration with a view to developing and implementing coherent and integrated policies in that respect. Finally, the European Conference on access to equality in the European Community had had two clear goals: first, to raise the level of awareness of members of the legal profession who wished to be informed but who were not necessarily specialists; and secondly, to reflect together on the 10 points submitted to the Commission for promoting its policy in respect of equality.

2. Regarding the integration of women in the labour market, a Community initiative programme, known as NOW, which aimed to promote equal opportunities for women in the field of employment and vocational training, had had a promising start. All its operational programmes, including supplementary measures to provide participants with child care, had been approved by the member States. Moreover, in 1992, a women's vocational training network, known as IRIS, had organized a fair which had provided an opportunity to take stock of activities and to pinpoint priority actions to respond to the needs of post-Maastricht Europe. The lessons learnt across the Community regarding women in employment made it possible for a strategy to be defined now to improve the situation of women during the third action programme and beyond.

3. In addition, the network entitled "Women and Employment" had carried out important research on the segregation of the labour market in the European Community. A report on the situation in the 12 member States would be published in early 1993. Finally, the Commission lent its support to a conference, organized by the Danish Ministry for Social Affairs, on the theme of reconciling employment and caring for children in the Nordic countries and the States members of the European Community.

4. As equal opportunities for women in employment went hand in hand with improving their status in society, a new network, named "Women in the Decision-Making Process", was currently producing a panorama of women's positions in decision-making posts throughout the Community, as well as

/...

(Mr. König, Observer, European Community)

developing a line of rational argument for increasing women's participation in that sphere. During the first phase, it would focus on three key areas: decision-making in politics, in trade unions and in the public sector. A major campaign would be launched to increase public awareness, and a charter, developed from the argument, would be released at a summit on women in power due to take place in Athens in November 1992.

5. The Commission, notably through the work of a steering committee for equal opportunities in broadcasting, continued its work to promote new images of women and men in the media industry. In that context, a programme was launched in 1992 to co-finance audio-visual productions dealing with equal opportunities.

6. In the European Commission, an internal action programme for staff was to attempt to ensure that, by 1994, women would hold 14 per cent of the Commission's A-grade (or professional) positions. It would be accompanied by measures to promote career development and reconcile domestic and professional responsibilities, and would also address the issue of recruiting women in other grades. In the same way, efforts were likely to be made to increase the number of male secretaries, typists and clerical assistants. The Commission believed that all advocates of equality should advance equality within their own walls if their advocacy was to be followed by others.

7. The integration of women in development operations was among the priorities of the Commission, which had accordingly published a handbook containing sectoral guidelines specifically dealing with the integration of women in the projects and programmes which it financed. Under its general guidelines for financial and technical cooperation with developing countries in Latin America for 1991-1995, the Community had taken steps to ensure that the projects and programmes were not detrimental to the situation of women, and that specific measures had been adopted to involve them on an equal footing in the productive process, social activities and decision-making. The only way to succeed in integrating women in the development process was to promote recognition of the important economic and social role of women and to make the appropriate resources available.

8. Ms. McLENNAN (United States of America) said that she believed that the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies could promote the expansion of democracy throughout the world. While progress towards democracy had admittedly been made since the 1970s, real democracy could not be attained without advancing the status of women. The United Nations could not therefore be satisfied with too much lip service at the expense of real commitment. She asked when the principles of the United Nations Charter concerning equality of opportunities would be applied.

(Ms. McLennan, United States)

9. On the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in 1995, each country should undertake an internal review of what remained to be accomplished. However, the United Nations Secretariat and all the specialized agencies should also initiate the same kind of internal review process. The General Assembly's endorsement of resolution 40/108 had given the Commission on the Status of Women the mandate to monitor implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies on a system-wide basis. Her delegation welcomed the report by the International Civil Service Commission on the status of women in the United Nations system (A/47/30), as it emphasized practical measures likely to produce tangible results. In addition, since 1970, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and the specialized agencies had adopted numerous decisions and resolutions aimed at improving the status of women. Unfortunately, for the most part, those had been ignored. In such circumstances, she asked when the Organization would be held accountable for its actions.

10. The action programme for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat was an extremely useful document in that it raised the question of the equality of opportunity upon which the Organization was founded. While it was true that the percentage of women in geographically distributed posts had increased somewhat (from 23.1 per cent in 1985 to 29.2 per cent in 1991), the percentage at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels had declined (7.3 per cent in 1985; 4.9 per cent in 1989 and currently 2.9 per cent). In view of the seriousness of the situation, the action plan must be implemented, together with the policy measures recommended by the Steering Committee and agreed to by the Secretary-General in December 1991. Her delegation welcomed the recommendation that departmental targets be set at each section and that the performance of managers be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness in improving the situation in their departments. It also welcomed the initiation of a career development system which would benefit men and women, and the maintaining of rosters by occupation and rosters of women. But the report also stated that the attainment of equality between men and women in the Secretariat required continued intensified efforts on the part of the administration, programme managers and Member States. Currently, however, there was no tangible evidence of leadership from the leadership of the Organization to effect those changes. There were no women serving as Under-Secretaries-General and by 1 March 1993 there would be no women at the Assistant Secretary-General level either. Given the objectives established in the General Assembly's resolutions on the Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, the situation was unacceptable.

11. The Forward-looking Strategies emphasized the need to focus on the legal literacy of women. Legal literacy should be seen as an important component of all programmes for the advancement of women; programmes should be based on the authentic needs and concerns of women and be designed to eliminate discrimination based on gender, age, cultural or ethnic background. While the formal right to equality existed in most countries, real equality in women's lives had not been achieved, thus preventing women from participating fully in

all levels of society. The law, even when written to protect women, did not automatically make them equal to men at the socio-economic level. There were still conflicts between customary law and the statutory legal system, due to entrenched customary practices which kept women from exercising their rights. Legislation which "protected women" should be reviewed periodically to determine whether it was actually helping or hindering the advancement of women. Legal literacy was an educational process which contributed to equality, peace, justice and development for women and men. A holistic perspective on women's rights should be developed linking economic, cultural, social and legal issues.

12. Special attention should be paid to women who lived in extreme poverty. Short- and long-term development planning should incorporate gender awareness, since economic development did not automatically lead to equitable distribution of benefits to women and men. Women were currently disproportionately represented among the poor and their needs needed to be closely examined. New strategies and programmes for women needed to be established in order to ensure equal treatment with men. Income maintenance alone was not the cure for poverty; policies that fostered women's self-sufficiency and independence and allowed them to participate in economic growth and social development should be introduced.

13. The Commission on the Status of Women would continue to prepare for the 1995 World Conference on Women and would endeavour to strengthen and clarify its mandate on communications. If within the next two years, the Commission on the Status of Women had not received enough communications to allow it to determine trends and patterns of discrimination against women, it ran the risk of losing its effectiveness.

14. Her delegation applauded the excellent work of the drafting group working on a declaration on the elimination of violence against women. It hoped that the draft declaration would make its way quickly through the United Nations system so that it could be adopted as it stood at the next meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council. In that event, at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the United Nations, by consensus, would express its abhorrence of violence against women.

15. Mrs. ANSELMI (Italy) thanked the Secretary-General for his excellent report (A/47/377) to the Committee outlining the goals to be reached between now and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

16. The status of women had improved all over the world, and in Italy as well, where 50 years of democracy had eliminated discrimination against women. Nevertheless, new laws adopted to benefit women needed to be brought into line with social and cultural changes if they were to be effective. In fact, women had to fight to ensure that rights protected by law were fully respected in reality. Thus, a law adopted in 1970 which provided for paid maternity leave for salaried women, was extended in 1991 to self-employed and

/...

(Mrs. Anselmi, Italy)

professional women. If violations occurred, those women had the possibility to file a complaint. The National Commission for Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities recently published a compilation of all laws promulgated since 1943 promoting gender equality, which had since been issued in a number of countries and become something of a success. Furthermore, the activities of women's groups, in particular associations of women lawyers, women judges and women journalists, as well as political movements and unions had been particularly effective in identifying violations. The National Commission for Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities played an essential role in translating legislation into practice in everyday life. The Commission was also studying ways to evaluate the actual impact of legislation on the status of women.

17. With regard to the question of development, she commended the Secretary-General for his report (A/47/377) which stated that economic development was not gender-neutral. In a period of economic crisis, it was women who suffered the most. They lost their jobs, had lower salaries and faced difficulties in combining careers with raising children. In Italy, there was an acute problem of development in the South, where female unemployment had reached 28 per cent (13 per cent nationwide). Several laws had been enacted over the past few years in an attempt to rectify that situation, in particular, a law establishing management training programmes. A special fund had been created to finance those programmes, providing loans to women owners of one or more enterprises that employed primarily women. Mention should also be made of a law aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination in the workplace.

18. In Italy, most of the elderly were women. Because of the system of pensions and services for the elderly, they had an acceptable standard of living. In addition, the State granted a minimum pension to women over 65 whose length of employment did not qualify them for a pension. Other social measures (free housing in retirement homes, financial assistance) had also been adopted to cope with the problem. The time had come for the Europe of the Twelve to speed up the process of coordinating social policy.

19. The chapter of the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/377) entitled "Peace: Women and the peace process" was very interesting in that it did not limit the discussion to the participation of women in the armed forces.

20. In Italy, the participation of women in the struggle against fascism and nazism had won them recognition of their political and civil rights. Aware that peace was not only the absence of war, but the building, day after day, of a more free and just society for all, Italian women had never demanded access to the armed forces. However, the question of their admission was currently being debated in the Italian Parliament. If the latter so decided, they would be free to enter such careers if they wished.

21. Now that the division of the world into spheres of influence decided at Yalta had come to an end, it was necessary to forge an international community

/...

(Mrs. Anselmi, Italy)

in the service of peace. Therefore, the United Nations must pursue its initiatives and strengthen its purpose of promoting a global peace policy. It was deplorable that women were insufficiently represented, indeed they were excluded, from both national and international bodies concerned with the maintenance of peace.

22. Mr. LUNA (Peru) said that, in order to strengthen the reactivated role of the United Nations since the end of East-West tensions, it was imperative to give the same priority to development problems as to security issues, and to achieve a balance in the functioning of the various bodies of the United Nations system. In that context, the Secretariat should constitute the vanguard of the restructuring process and should stimulate change by becoming a cohesive structure capable of giving due attention to the different political, socio-economic, environmental and security factors that form the basis of a common strategy for peace and development.

23. To meet that challenge, restructuring efforts should result in practical measures, particularly in the social field. The participation of women in the formulation and execution of specific policies and programmes could be the catalyst between the new international order and the realities in the field. In their daily struggle to improve living conditions for the family, community and country, women gave meaning to the ideals of universality, development, human rights, peace and security expressed in the United Nations Charter. Whatever their geographical origin and cultural background, they were better equipped than anyone to analyse development problems and trends, raise awareness of the most urgent needs and promote the common interest.

24. In its programmes the United Nations must take into account the pioneering role of women and ensure that they are adequately represented throughout the system, particularly at the highest levels, so that they could direct its efforts towards the countries and groups with the greatest need. He welcomed the appointment of women to the high-level advisory board established by the Secretary-General and hoped that women would also participate in the Commission on Sustainable Development. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio had highlighted the fact that women, environment and development were inextricably linked.

25. UNIFEM had not only contributed to greater awareness of the situation of women, but had carried out its mandate with dynamism, foresight, flexibility and sensitivity. In its work, it was given to direct dialogue and a holistic view of problems. In spite of the prejudices on the matter, advancement of women was undoubtedly the only issue in international relations that was not affected by the traditional divisions between North and South.

26. Peruvian women had endorsed the ideals of the United Nations Charter and the goals defined by UNIFEM when it was established. The Peruvian woman was dynamic, capable of directing and organizing her life and to exert a decisive influence on the family, community and country. With the support of the

/...

(Mr. Luna, Peru)

majority of Peruvians, she was promoting a concept of development focused on the human being and self-reliance. Consequently, Peruvian women had helped to promote better use of human potential and effective power-sharing. They had also been affected by the terrorism rampant in Peru, and many women activists had fallen victim to the Shining Path forces.

27. He hoped that the United Nations would consider the hopes and needs of the women of his country and would reach agreement on global strategies and specific measures for their advancement. His delegation attached the greatest importance to the convening of the next World Conference on Women and hoped that sufficient resources would be allocated to ensure the success of its work.

28. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the press release of 28 October mentioning that currently 117 States were parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. He invited those which were not parties to contact their Governments, if need be, urging them to ratify or sign the Convention before the end of the current session.

29. Ms. VANNINI (Nicaragua) said that the Government headed by Mrs. Violeta Barrios Chamorro, President of Nicaragua, had taken a whole series of measures to respond to the urgent needs and demands of Nicaraguan women, who made up more than 50 per cent of the population and had suffered great hardship during the war. In particular, a law had been passed entitling mothers to receive a food allowance for their children and requiring fathers to pay the cost. That law represented progress compared with earlier legislation because it covered both children born out of wedlock and children who had not been legally recognized by their fathers. There had also been some reforms of the criminal code favourable to women. In cases such as the rape of a minor, for example, the law took into account extenuating circumstances and provided more severe penalties. In other cases, it no longer recognized being under the influence of alcohol or drugs as an extenuating circumstance.

30. In addition, the Government had redoubled its efforts at the institutional level to safeguard the rights of women and eliminate all forms of discrimination, both in law and in practice. One of the most important results achieved in that regard had been the restructuring and revitalization of the Nicaraguan Institute of Women, whose members had held cabinet office since 1991. The twofold objective of the Nicaraguan Government was to promote more active participation by women in social policy-making in Nicaragua and, to that end, to eliminate sexual stereotyping by means of information campaigns. The campaigns envisaged would focus on enhancing the status of housework, on women's right to participate in the country's economic, social, cultural and political activities and to have access to education and health, and on creating the conditions for effective implementation of women's rights.

/...

(Ms. Vannini, Nicaragua)

31. Activities carried out by the Institute since its revitalization had consisted in drawing up a programme for the advancement of women which was to be implemented in the country's 144 municipalities. Priority was to be given to women heads of households, of whom there were many in Nicaragua both because of the armed conflict, which had taken a severe toll among men, and because increasing numbers of men were failing to fulfil their family responsibilities. In addition, the Institute was engaged in various activities aimed at (i) providing support for the national reconciliation and rehabilitation programme; (ii) supporting the formulation and follow-up of social policy; (iii) preventing violence in the family and protecting women who were the victims of such violence; (iv) establishing "self-esteem" workshops; (v) implementing a programme devoted to "women, environment and development", in which priority would be given to rural areas; and (vi) the establishment of a data bank on women.

32. Government action at the institutional level was also evident from the establishment in 1992 of a national commission to combat violence against women. The commission, which consisted of senior officials, was responsible at the national level for combating all forms of violence against women and children, and was supported in its work by various non-governmental organizations and national and international associations.

33. Finally, it should also be mentioned that in November 1991 the First Ladies of the Central American countries had held their fifth meeting, which had been devoted to the topic: "Women, environment and development" and had led to the elaboration and implementation of a regional programme on that subject.

34. Referring to the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (A/47/340), she said that Nicaragua welcomed the efforts of UNIFEM to ensure a greater role for women in international forums in order to enable them to promote their interests, as in the case of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It also welcomed UNIFEM's cooperation in regard to the participation of women in agricultural activities, but hoped that the financial and other support provided by the Fund in Central American countries would increase, bearing in mind the fact that the status of women in that region was particularly unsatisfactory, due to such factors as poverty, wars, natural disasters and the adverse consequences of structural adjustment programmes in their initial stage.

35. Her delegation wished to stress the importance of the 1995 World Conference on Women, and pointed out that, in its view, programmes aimed at making women economically independent could only achieve their goals if they were accompanied by campaigns to promote greater awareness among men of the role played by women in a country's development and the need to accord them the status they needed to take their proper place in the life of society.

/...

36. Mr. YIBOKOU (Togo) said that for more than half a century the United Nations had been concerned with promoting the status of women and had taken many initiatives in that connection, such as the establishment of the Committee on the Status of Women, the adoption of various declarations and conventions, the proclamation of International Women's Year and the holding of two world conferences on women, one at Copenhagen in 1980 and the other at Nairobi in 1985, which had seen the adoption of a pragmatic programme of action in the form of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000. By participating in the current debate, his delegation intended to reaffirm its commitment to the advancement of women and to make its contribution to measures aimed at the full integration of women in development and their participation in decision-making at national and international levels.

37. He welcomed the efforts made by the United Nations Development Fund for Women in connection with access to education, health care, land, technology and credit, and the enjoyment of their basic rights, and hoped that the Fund would expand its programmes for promoting the participation of women in international forums and improving their access to information regarding their own status and their opportunities for action.

38. Greater coordination of activities at national, regional and international levels would promote implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, and his delegation hoped that particular attention would be devoted to four specific areas of activity.

39. Recognizing that greater awareness on the part of women of their rights was one of the preconditions for the success of the Nairobi Strategies, he expressed the hope that further information campaigns would be organized on issues relating to women's day-to-day life and that priority would be accorded to functional literacy programmes.

40. In order to strengthen the authority of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, States that had not yet done so should be encouraged to become Parties to the Convention. With regard to States which had entered reservations to the Convention, Togo supported the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in the context of the preparatory work for the World Conference on Human Rights, to be held in 1993, namely that the States parties concerned should be invited to reconsider their reservations with a view to withdrawing them and instituting a procedure similar to that provided for in the case of human rights instruments.

41. He stressed the importance of the periodic reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention. It was to be hoped that those reports, if necessary prepared with the assistance of the competent bodies of the United Nations, would be regularly submitted, would clearly identify the obstacles encountered in implementing the Convention and would include information regarding prevention and protection measures adopted in order to

(Mr. Yibokou, Togo)

eliminate violence against women, in accordance with recommendation 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

42. With regard to preparations for the World Conference on Women to be held in 1995, his delegation thought that the issues which the Commission on the Status of Women proposed to place on the Conference agenda were judiciously chosen. If the Conference was to achieve its objective of appraising the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, it was necessary to set up an efficient mechanism to coordinate the work of national preparatory committees and to ensure that the preparatory regional meetings gave consideration to the role of women in sustainable development, the elimination of negative images of women, and major obstacles to the advancement of women. Rural women and non-governmental organizations should be associated with the preparatory process and with the holding of the Conference which, moreover, should receive extensive media coverage.

43. His delegation shared the view of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women that the question of equal treatment of men and women in respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms should appear on the agenda of the World Conference on Human Rights to be held in 1993.

44. The Togolese Government, affirming its will to enhance the participation of women in the development process and to ensure that women played their part in the management of affairs of the State, had in 1977 set up a General Directorate on the Status of Women, later transformed into the Ministry of Social Affairs and of the Status of Women. Among the activities conducted by Togolese women since that date, mention should be made of awareness and mobilization campaigns among women with a view to their advancement; focusing on the women's component in development programmes and projects; promotion of women's production groups; creation of income-generating activities; manufacture and distribution of improved cooking hearths; and the preparation of a Code to govern individual and family Life.

45. Mr. AROSEMENA (Panama), speaking on behalf of the Central American Group, said that the status of women was less satisfactory in countries not parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women than in countries party to the Convention, and therefore urged States which had not yet acceded to the Convention to do so.

46. The status of women remained by and large unsatisfactory because of the worsening economic crisis and of the continuing existence of traditional obstacles to the advancement of women in society. That was the conclusion of the book entitled The World's Women: 1970-1990 published jointly by the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Fund for the Development of Women, which expressed the view that women were still far from being on an equal footing with men in terms of political power, as well as remuneration for work and equality of opportunities.

/...

(Mr. Arosemena, Panama)

47. As developing countries, the countries of Central America wished to stress the obligation of solidarity with women in the world's poorest regions incumbent upon the international community, and particularly upon the wealthy countries. They also appealed to the international community to implement effectively the international instruments on women adopted since 1975, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and pointed out the need to undertake a full appraisal of the results of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and to study the situation of women living in rural and marginal areas and involved in mass migrations.

48. Discrimination against women was a particularly serious matter considering the role of women in raising and educating children, who were, after all, the future human resources of a country. In that respect, he emphasized that the educational systems of Central American countries had been expanded and improved and that women had benefited from those advances. They continued, however, to suffer discrimination in the educational sphere for two reasons, the first being that in the higher stages of education women continued to be oriented toward traditionally "feminine" careers and the second, that stereotypes of the roles of men and women in society - and therefore the model of feminine submission to men - were perpetuated in the educational programmes.

49. As regards the place of women in the world of labour, it had to be noted that women had always played an important role in the development process of Central American countries, even if that role was not always recognized because of sexist values. Women's participation in the development process was improving, but it would still be difficult to affirm that responsibilities were being shared in a just and efficacious manner between men and women in the home and within society. The greater participation of women in the world of employment was due to a number of factors - the will to improve their status, which in turn was due to their improved educational level; the economic situation, which frequently necessitated a second wage coming into the household; and the fact that women often had to provide for their children alone, as family heads. It also had to be noted that their remuneration level was well below that of men although they were often better educated and although unemployment, an acute problem in Central America, affected women far more than men.

50. Turning to the question of women's participation in political life, a determining factor in their advancement, he said that generally speaking opportunities for women to draw attention to their specific problems and to take part in the decision-making process remained limited. Although women in most countries enjoyed the full range of political rights, positions of responsibility and decision-making were in the overwhelming majority of cases held by men; that was true even in the developed countries, where women occupied, at best, a third of such posts. There had been little development in that respect in the countries of Central America. However, it was

/...

(Mr. Arosemena, Panama)

encouraging to note that the Nicaraguans had elected a woman to the presidency of their Republic in 1990 and that a Guatemalan woman had received the Nobel Peace Prize on 16 October 1992. He also wished to point out that in Panama, 49 governmental organizations concerned with the advancement of women had set up a National Women's Council to deal with the most urgent problems facing Panamanian women, crime first and foremost.

51. The countries of Central America recognized the fundamental role played by the United Nations in matters relating to women and development but considered that, by virtue of an integrated, multidisciplinary and prejudice-free approach, women's problems should be assigned a more important place in the Organization's operational activities in the development field.

52. Mr. LI Daoyu (China) said that it was clear from the annual report on their implementation (A/47/377) that the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women had become a global programme of action and that their objectives of equality, development and peace would only be achieved if the necessary effort continued to be made at the international, regional and national levels, particularly in developing countries where the situation of women remained vulnerable because of poverty and illiteracy.

53. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had just considered the Chinese Government's second report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Convention had been ratified or acceded to by 119 countries, thereby demonstrating the growing importance attached to equal rights for women throughout the world. China had passed a law on the protection of the rights and interests of women, in force since October 1992, which gave concrete expression to the various stipulations on equality of men and women contained in the Constitution in the areas of politics, culture, education, work, property, the person, marriage and the family and the elimination of discrimination against women. Penalties for violations were expressly provided.

54. The Government and the people of China, especially women, would have the great honour of hosting the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995 in accordance with resolution 36/8 of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Conference would be devoted to the second review of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies and the formulation of a programme of action for follow-up efforts to the end of the decade. His Government had established a Chinese Organizing Committee composed of principal leaders from more than 30 bodies, including 26 ministries and commissions of the State Council, press agencies, the Beijing municipal government and mass organizations. State Councillor Mr. Li Tieying was the Chairman, and the Vice-chairmen were the Secretary-General of the State Council (also Secretary-General of the Committee) and one official from each of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the municipal government of Beijing and the All-China Women's Federation. The main tasks of the Committee would be to

/...

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

prepare for the Conference and to devise a national mobilization plan. The Chinese Government was fully prepared to cooperate closely with other Governments, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to ensure that the Conference ran smoothly. It would provide an opportunity to exchange experience, strengthen cooperation and explore new avenues to achieve the objectives of the Strategies, and thus to promote the advancement of women, world peace and development.

55. Mr. SLABY (Czechoslovakia) said that his country attached great importance to the question of equality between the sexes and to the elimination of discrimination against women. It highly appreciated the efforts of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in that field. With regard to that form of discrimination, the second periodic report of Czechoslovakia on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had been prepared before the re-establishment of democracy and the transition to a market economy in November 1989. Therefore, it did not reflect the changes in the social situation since that time. The report had been revised, but still did not provide a true picture of the current status of women in the social, political and economic spheres. The preparation of an updated third periodic report for submission to the Committee in early 1993 was currently under way.

56. The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic had taken part for the first time, as a Member State, in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-sixth session. It had welcomed its membership as an opportunity to participate in an exchange of views among States which already had sophisticated legislation governing the question of the equal status of women as well as States which had not yet reached the stage of incorporating such laws into their legislation.

57. Considering that women in general, especially in developing countries, were highly vulnerable to economic problems, Czechoslovakia greatly appreciated the activities of UNESCO, UNIFEM and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) for the emancipation of women and their integration into development. His country was aware of women's indispensable role in a democratic society and fully complied with United Nations resolutions emphasizing the need to support women in order to permit their broadest possible participation in economic, social, cultural, and political life. In that context, his Government had prepared a draft amending the guidelines on the implementation of the rights of women. Unfortunately, its consideration had had to be postponed because of the country's political difficulties.

58. As indicated in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000, one of the ways in which Governments could promote the broadest possible participation of women in all spheres of society consisted in calling on the experience and expertise of United Nations agencies and programmes to increase the awareness of their rights among women

themselves. Towards that end, in May 1992, Czechoslovakia had hosted the expert group meeting to examine ways to increase women's awareness of their rights, including legal literacy, organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Office at Vienna. The implementation of the recommendations adopted at that meeting should become a stimulus to the incorporation of issues regarding the equal status of women into national legislation.

59. As noted by the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council during their deliberations, the goals stated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had not been achieved. Czechoslovakia was ready to make the necessary effort to implement the recommendations of those bodies, and particularly to submit more women candidates for vacant professional posts in the Secretariat of United Nations organizations.

60. His delegation attached great importance to the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 as an opportunity to evaluate the progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Czechoslovakia was certain that, during the current times of major political and socio-economic change, that Conference not only would assist in resolving the problems of women, but would also have a positive influence on the direction and impact of those changes.

61. Mr. AL-DOSARI (Bahrain) said that, while welcoming genuine efforts reflected in the Secretary-General's report on implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000 (A/47/377), the studies and research should be continued with the aim of arriving at recommendations for achieving the goals set for the advancement of women, and account should be taken, in fulfilling those goals, of the traditions and customs forming the background to women's life.

62. His country supported the activities of the Commission on the Status of Women and the vital role it played in implementing the Strategies. The idea of organizing in 1995 a world conference on women had generated wide support, which had taken shape in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/12 and General Assembly resolution 46/98. He thanked the Chinese Government for its proposal to act as host to the Beijing Conference, and hoped that the collective efforts of Member States and the competent bodies of the United Nations would ensure that the Conference could be held expeditiously and that it would achieve its stated objectives.

63. In the spirit of the Shari'a (which made provision for the protection of women and respect for their dignity), Bahrain had incorporated in its Constitution a number of provisions, including article 18, which affirmed the equality of all citizens before the law, without discrimination as to gender. Men and women enjoyed equal opportunities in all aspects of life, including health-care and education. Women's access to education had led to a marked

/...

(Mr. Al-Dosari, Bahrain)

decline in illiteracy in that social group and official statistics indicated that the number of women completing primary education and going on to higher-level studies was increasing every year. The country's cultural and social institutions played an important role, supplementing the efforts of the authorities, in initiating literacy programmes for women. In conclusion, it should be mentioned that women held senior posts in the private, public and banking sectors.

64. Ms. HASSANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was crucial to improve women's social status in the light of their impact on the development process. Among the major factors affecting the advancement of women, mention should be made of education and greater awareness of their rights, which would enable them to participate more actively in public life and which, on another level, would contribute to the betterment of humanity as a whole. The nature and quality of women's education had a deep impact on the upbringing of children, economic productivity, and reduction in the population growth-rate, which would ultimately determine the general quality of life. It was for that reason that Governments and the international community had a threefold duty to improve the status of women, in terms of their education, health and employment, and to ensure that they participated in development policies.

65. It was vitally important that women were protected from the violence to which they were subjected in all parts of the world; violence had had the inevitable result of depriving them of their basic rights and liberties, thus impeding realization of the objectives of the United Nations Decade for the Advancement of Women: Equality, Development and Peace. From that standpoint, the status of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palestine and occupied South Lebanon, where torture, massacre and other violent crimes were widespread, was all the more deplorable. Implementation of the Nairobi Strategies at a global level would be possible only if there were comprehensive and continuous endeavours by the international community in a climate of tranquillity, without which efforts could not bear fruit, in which actions should take the place of words, and conventions were implemented.

66. In her country, women took part on the same basis as men in all educational, research and political activities. The Government was devoted to increasing the number of women in decision-making positions and political life, on the guidelines established by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-sixth session in its resolution E/CN.6/1992/L.15. Girls currently accounted for 46 per cent of Iranian students, a proportion which the Government intended to raise to 50 per cent. It was also Iran's policy to expand the programme of higher education. Increased and better opportunities of employment were being made available to women. In the summer of 1992, the Women's Social and Cultural Council had prepared a comprehensive plan on the rights of working women in the Islamic Republic with regard to equal employment opportunities and equal pay for equal work. The opportunity in certain cases to choose working-hours was being considered in the High Cultural Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Council would submit

(Ms. Hassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

its proposals to the Islamic Consultative Assembly. Women currently accounted for 35 per cent of staff in the public service. A number of government offices - the Women's International Affairs Department (in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the Women's Affairs Bureau (in the Islamic Consultative Assembly), and such non-governmental organizations as the Women's Society, the Women's Islamic Institute and the Zainab Society - were focusing on matters relating to women. The Women's Affairs Bureau, which had recently been established and was attached to the office of the President, was responsible for protecting women, guaranteeing their civil rights and promoting them to decision-making posts. The office was headed by a woman, who was also responsible for advising the President on matters of concern to women.

67. Her Government was of the view that there should be greater awareness of women's social and cultural status and that they should benefit from an atmosphere conducive to their intellectual progress. In that regard, the role of the mass media, educational facilities, non-discriminatory legislation and administrative directives could not be overemphasized. The participation of women in social and cultural activities was thus encouraged, and the Government was particularly concerned to ensure protection of children and single mothers with low incomes, and also elderly and disabled women. In that connection it should be noted that the Consultative Assembly had recently approved a bill on the protection of women and children.

68. The World Conference on Human Rights, the international Conference on Population and Development, the 1994 international year of the family and the 1995 World Conference on Women would provide Governments, international organizations and the United Nations with the opportunity to work collectively in order to implement the key provisions of the Forward-looking Strategies, to exchange experience and to make preparations for the future.

69. Ms. ARUNGU OLENDE (Kenya) said that the advancement of women was one area in which the United Nations had achieved slow and lacklustre progress, in particular with regard to the situation of women in the Secretariat who, as at 30 June 1992, occupied 30.6 per cent of posts subject to geographical distribution. Not a single woman occupied a post at the level of Under-Secretary-General, although two years previously there had been two.

70. Referring to the Secretary-General's report on enhancement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/47/508), her delegation proposed that other United Nations bodies should accelerate the recruitment of Africans, and more specifically African women, and increase the resources provided for staff development.

71. As indicated in other reports of the Secretary-General, devoted respectively to implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 (A/47/377) and the Advancement of Women (A/47/340), the efforts being made to ensure recognition of all the

/...

(Ms. Arungu Olende, Kenya)

rights of women and their role represented a continuing struggle in which the slightest sign of relaxation or lack of vigilance could subvert such progress as had already been achieved.

72. In respect of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, efforts must be made to ensure that it would be more productive than the previous three conferences. During the preparatory period lessons should be drawn from past mistakes. For instance, at the Nairobi Conference, over 100 resolutions had been produced without sufficient time to discuss them, and they had not been discussed so far. Nairobi had at least proved that the stream of resolutions had been useless because it duplicated the Forward-looking Strategies, which had covered almost all the same topics. Therefore, at the Beijing Conference, it would be sufficient to produce a similar document which could be a Platform for Action. That proposal should be considered quickly, since it would have a definite effect on budgeting and planning for preparatory meetings for the Conference.

73. Her delegation had submitted the periodic report of Kenya to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which would consider it in January 1993. That report painted a realistic picture of what Kenya had done in implementation not only of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women but also of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000.

74. Regarding the contribution of women to sustainable development, the Director of UNIFEM had already commented that the Rio Conference had given prominent consideration to the status of women because of the efforts of women, especially through non-governmental organizations from all parts of the world. Women must be given an appropriate level of representation in any body - a commission on sustainable development, for example - eventually established to consolidate the outcome of that important conference. The efforts of UNIFEM to assist women's programme in environmentally friendly development, from the promotion of energy-saving stoves in the Sahel region in the 1980s to tree-planting campaigns, should be congratulated. Other institutions concerned with development, such as UNDP, the World Bank and non-governmental organizations, should do more to assist women, especially those living in developing countries, particularly in Africa, to meet the challenges posed by environmental degradation.

75. Women and children made up between 60 and 80 per cent of refugees and displaced persons in Africa. That situation had reached crisis proportions, especially in the Horn of Africa. UNIFEM must pay greater attention to the problems of refugee women in close cooperation with UNHCR, UNDP and the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. Kenya had in the past taken in more than a half million refugees fleeing civil strife in neighbouring countries. Assistance to refugee and displaced women should be directed towards the local communities and host countries, because the need to share food and natural resources often led to degradation of land and reduced incomes.

/...

(Ms. Arungu Olende, Kenya)

76. The phrase "feminization of poverty", referring to poverty specifically affecting women, applied currenty to the low-paying, dead-end jobs which they often held. Although on average women worked more hours a day than most men, they often found themselves at the low end of the pay scale. That form of discrimination based on gender could lead to further degradation in the status of women unless there was greater awareness.

77. Mrs. AGGREY-ORLEANS (Ghana) said that the Declaration of the United Nations Decade for Women had been historic because it was the first time that the international community had attempted to take action both at the national and the international levels to promote the advancement of women from the viewpoint of the elimination of gender inequalities and the full participation of women in development and in the search for peace. The adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in 1985 showed a recognition of the limited achievements of the Decade. At its thirty-fourth session, the Commission on the Status of Women had once again been forced to report a general lack of progress in achieving the objectives of equality, development and peace.

78. In its resolution 46/98, the General Assembly had reaffirmed its determination to encourage the full participation of women in economic, social, cultural, civil and political affairs and to promote development, cooperation and international peace. To that end, it called for an improved pace in the implementation of the Strategies in the crucial last decade of the twentieth century, since the cost to societies of failing to implement the Strategies would be high in terms of slowed economic and social development, misuse of human resources and reduced progress for society as a whole.

79. On their part, the Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, meeting at Jakarta for their tenth Conference, had stated that the full and equal integration of women into the development process at all levels was a central goal of the Movement. Moreover, in its report on the work of its thirty-second session before the current General Assembly, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had expressed its disappointment at the minimal reference to the role of women in development under the System-Wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development for the use of United Nations agencies in execution of activities arising from those two concerns. The Committee had recommended that the omission should be redressed by including, in particular, access of women to the decision-making level.

80. The "opportunity regained" of which the Secretary-General had so eloquently spoken in his report on the work of the Organization (A/47/1) would have little meaning for half the world's population - its women - unless the advancement of women ceased to be an empty phrase. Along those lines, the fact that the Fourth World Conference on Women would be held during the fiftieth anniversary year of the United Nations was quite symbolic. Because its Charter reaffirmed faith in fundamental human rights, the dignity and

/...

(Mrs. Aggrey-Orleans, Ghana)

worth of the human person, equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, the United Nations could not help but make the advancement of women one of its primary objectives. Renewed efforts were required to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, by placing particular attention on the priorities defined by the General Assembly in resolution 46/98 with regard to national policies and programmes.

81. Those priorities had been the basis of Ghana's policy for the advancement of women, with emphasis laid on empowering them to gain control over their own lives. Education had a primary role to play, and the equal access of girls to education, which was far from being achieved, must be considered a priority. The direct relationship between education and human development, and consequently economic and social development, had inspired a long history of adult education programmes for women, spanning basic education, home management and preparation for gainful employment. The Department of Community Development, which ran women's training institutes, targeted rural women.

82. As part of the current educational reforms, the Non-Formal Education Division within the Ministry of Education was spearheading efforts to eradicate illiteracy in Ghana by the year 2000. Its programmes were specially conceived to be sensitive to the particular needs of women. Its work had been complemented by the activities of another important government agency, the National Council on Women and Development, the thrust of which was to integrate women fully into the development process as both agents and beneficiaries.

83. UNIFEM had cooperated with the National Council on Women and Development in introducing rural women to innovative programmes that would enable them to engage in better-paid and less drudgery-filled activities, by training them in such subjects as management and accounting in small-scale industry. The Council also did research on all facets of women's lives with a view to making recommendations to the Government for the advancement of women. The Council had received generous funding from other multilateral organizations and from bilateral sources.

84. A number of non-governmental organizations in Ghana were also active in promoting the advancement of women. The 31 December Women's Movement, for instance, mobilized women at the grass-roots level for projects seeking to improve their standard of living. Also, The Ghana Federation of Women Lawyers had done much to promote the welfare of women and children by raising public awareness of the purposes and principles of the United Nations in their legal and social aspects.

85. Her Government's human development strategy fully recognized the close symbiosis between educational achievement, health for all, nutrition, food security, safe water supply, sanitation and housing, and the strategies proposed to achieve those goals addressed the specific needs of women.

(Mrs. Aggrey-Orleans, Ghana)

86. In the area of peace, her delegation remained convinced that women could make a significant difference in political life, both nationally and internationally, on an equal basis with men, in decision-making as well. In Ghana, women's participation in public and political life was restricted mainly by their lack of education and by the multiple roles society expected them to perform. The country's new Constitution, however, in whose drafting women had participated through their representation at the Consultative Assembly, increased their participation. The 31 December Women's Movement had, moreover, spared no effort in encouraging women, particularly rural women, to take part in political life. The hope was that the efforts to have women assume responsibilities at the national level would lead to the recruitment of many more women from developing countries.

87. Obviously the advancement of women could not be separated from the international environment, particularly the international economic order. The end of the cold war was indeed an opportunity regained. Her delegation looked forward to a sharpened focus on the sustainable development of the developing countries and their full integration into the world economy. That was the prerequisite for the advancement of women.

88. Mrs. VILLAROEL (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) observed that women, who represented half the world, constituted two thirds of the one billion illiterates and two thirds of the workforce, and one per cent of the landowners; furthermore, they had only 10 per cent of the global income. Under its mandate, UNESCO was working for equality of opportunity in education, science, culture and communication, and was targeting women, Africa and the least developed countries. It sought to promote literacy and basic education for girls and women, give them access to scientific and technical education, and ensure their participation in development, the protection of the environment and the preservation of the cultural heritage, as both agents and beneficiaries.

89. UNESCO action on behalf of women was conducted at four levels: normative activities, implementing the resolutions and conventions adopted by the General Conference; study and research activities of all kinds, such as its assessment of 20 years of population education, or the study done in Greece on drugs used by female secondary school pupils as part of a preventive education programme against drug abuse; training activities aimed at helping to improve the status of women in UNESCO fields of competence; and operational activities involving the execution of projects in various countries financed from the regular budget or with extrabudgetary funds.

90. With particular reference to training in all its forms and at all levels, the campaign to eliminate illiteracy by the year 2000 was far from over. Many functional literacy projects and civic education projects for women have been set up in different regions of the world. UNESCO provided travel and study grants to women from the developing countries to allow them to take training courses in the sciences or to attend international conferences. It organized

(Mrs. Villaroel, UNESCO)

seminars and conferences on the environment, two of which had recently been assigned to women; it promoted the participation of women in the communications sector and had just included in its budget a new type of activity, the organizing of summer universities for women. As part of the fight against the procuring and forced prostitution of women, a plan of action had been launched based on the recommendations of the Committee of Experts who had met at Pennsylvania State University in the United States at the invitation of UNESCO.

91. UNESCO intended to take part in the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, bearing in mind the priorities mentioned earlier. The outcome of the specific activities to improve the status of women in the various programme sectors - education, the social and human sciences, science, culture and communication - would constitute UNESCO's input to the World Conference.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
22nd meeting
held on
Thursday, 29 October 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. DEKANY (Vice-Chairman)	(Hungary)
later:	Mr. KRENKEL (Chairman)	(Austria)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 93: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

(b) CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/47/SR.22
9 November 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

/...

In the absence of Mr. Krenkel (Austria), Mr. Dekany (Hungary), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (*continued*) (A/47/38, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/88-S/23563, A/47/340, 368, 377, 391, 508 and 564)

1. Mrs. WADIBIA-ANYANWU (Nigeria) welcomed the efforts being made to improve the status of women in the Secretariat and urged the Secretary-General to appoint more women to the upper echelons of the Organization.

2. Her Government had long acknowledged the contribution of women to national development and had sought to ensure overall equality of treatment for women. To that end, it had set up a National Commission on Women, which had actively promoted the participation of women in the socio-economic, political and cultural spheres. In order to ensure that those efforts were continued following the changeover from military to civilian rule, the current administration had established the Centre for Women's Affairs.

3. Women's organizations in Nigeria, which enjoyed the full support of the Government, were concerned mainly with efforts to improve the status of women and with campaigns against drug abuse among youth. Nigerian women planned to continue their efforts to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies; in that connection, the First Lady of her country had been an active participant in the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, held at Geneva from 25 to 26 February 1992, which had identified modalities for improving the status and well-being of rural women, who constituted nearly 40 per cent of the total work force.

4. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) would continue to be an important force in the advancement of women. Her delegation called on INSTRAW to make greater efforts to strengthen women's role in the informal sector, in particular by formulating policy in that area and by providing training, credit and other assistance.

5. It was disheartening that women throughout the world scarcely participated in decision-making processes, that few women were in leadership positions and that the gap between *de jure* and de facto equality continued to widen. The international community must act vigorously to enhance the participation of women in public and private life and, in that connection, she welcomed the decision taken by the Secretary-General to formalize the post of Focal Point for Women within the Office of Human Resources Management.

6. Her delegation held the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in high regard and supported the proposal that the Committee should meet for three weeks at its next and subsequent sessions, in order to reduce the enormous backlog of reports.

/...

(Mrs. Wadibia-Anyanwu, Nigeria)

7. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) played a major role in integrating women in the development process. Her delegation agreed that the time had come for the world to draw from a wider pool of talent and, in so doing, offer more innovative avenues for change. While Nigerian rural women were prepared for those changes, they would need assistance in the form of UNIFEM operational projects and programmes.

8. Mrs. BIRAUD (France) said that while the progress made thus far, in advancing the status of women, should not be minimized, discrimination against women persisted in many forms, among them the increasing feminization of poverty and violence against women. Her delegation accordingly welcomed the convening of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the agenda of which included a review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and the elaboration of a Platform for Action. The review and appraisal should take as its sources the standard and well-known documents on efforts to implement the Strategies, as well as less familiar material dealing with such topics as the "invisible" population of women working in agriculture, the informal sector and at home. Elaborating the Platform for Action would require a combination of realism, creativity and foresight and, in that regard, it would be useful to conduct a region-by-region review, summarizing in each case the achievements made in advancing the cause of women, prospects for the future, obstacles to further progress, the resources needed and suggested priorities.

9. Regional meetings were important forums for preparing the Conference and should be provided with the necessary financial and technical assistance. France would be hosting in November 1992 a meeting of the scientific committee established at the inter-African meetings on women and development.

10. The success of the Fourth World Conference on Women, like that of the other major conferences held or to be held during the first half of the 1990s, depended on adequate financial and human resources. Financial investments reflected the importance of a particular issue to the international community, which could not but continue its efforts to promote the advancement of women.

11. Given the extent of its expertise, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) would no doubt play a major role in preparations for the World Conference. It was unfortunate that, despite its valiant efforts, CEDAW was significantly behind schedule in considering the reports submitted to it by States parties. Its increased workload should be taken into consideration in allocating time and resources to it. Priority should be given to the consideration of initial reports, since the information in many second and third reports was already out of date by the time they came to be considered. Her delegation endorsed the proposal to allocate three weeks for the twelfth and subsequent sessions of CEDAW, until the backlog of reports was eliminated.

(Mrs. Biraud, France)

12. With regard to the status of women in the Secretariat, the facts spoke for themselves: very few women in posts at the D-1 level and above and fewer career prospects for women than for men at all levels. Her delegation noted with satisfaction the proposals made by the Secretary-General to remedy the situation, as contained in document A/47/508, and the efforts being made to increase the promotion of women at the P-2 to P-5 levels. The issue of women in higher-level posts had not been satisfactorily resolved, however. The recruitment of women representing different geographical regions and working languages should be encouraged. The fault lay not only with the Secretariat but also with Member States, which tended to propose a disproportionate number of male candidates for posts.

13. Her delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (A/47/377), which clearly defined the priority themes to be considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its next session. It appreciated the report's emphasis on the links between all forms of violence - domestic, social and international - and its observation that violence against women increased in times of social unrest. The latter phenomenon was all too evident in the former Yugoslavia, where females of all ages had been victims of sexual violence. The international community must denounce those acts, which reflected a systematic policy of inflicting degrading treatment, and take measures to prevent them and to assist the victims.

14. The draft declaration on violence against women, to be considered at the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women, would help to break the conspiracy of silence regarding violence against women in all its forms. Adoption of the declaration by the United Nations would increase the credibility of female victims of violence and affirm that such acts were a violation of individual dignity.

15. Development theories and strategies for alleviating poverty had thus far failed to include any gender analysis and the development process had largely been assumed by most theorists to be "gender-neutral". Women benefited less from economic growth than men, however, and paid a higher price in times of economic crisis. It was time to give specific consideration to the impact on women of development strategies and international assistance and cooperation. The report on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (A/47/340) would be very valuable in that connection. Her Government fully endorsed the Fund's basic principles - to help women make their needs known and control their own destinies - and it would, as in 1991, be increasing its contribution to UNIFEM.

16. Another vital issue for women was access to knowledge regarding their rights under the law. Every legal system reflected the society it served and the place of women within that society. Teaching women the principles of law represented more than practical assistance; it helped them develop the analytical skills necessary to bring about their own advancement.

/...

17. The situation of elderly women was an acute problem, particularly in developing countries, and required urgent consideration. If left unresolved, that problem might turn out to be a major impediment to the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies.

18. Mrs. MAIR (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that those States were continuing their efforts to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and commended the United Nations system for its invaluable contribution in that regard.

19. The priority themes to be considered at the thirty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women - equality, development and peace - were of the greatest relevance in the current international context. Social issues had to be given top priority and, in that connection, it should be recalled that women and children represented the overwhelming majority of victims of poverty or violence, or both.

20. It had been repeatedly demonstrated that women lacked equality under the law and in practice. While a growing number of Governments had become parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and were thus legally bound to ensure equal treatment for women, *de jure* equality was only a first step. Women as well as men needed to learn about women's rights under the law. To that end, the University of the West Indies had, in cooperation with the Institute of Social Studies at The Hague, developed a programme of women and development studies which made a critical analysis of women's lives and the relationships between men and women. The University's research efforts had helped the region to achieve greater gender equity; it was also developing models of sustainable development, which were of use in policy planning and implementation.

21. The States members of CARICOM welcomed the adoption by the Commission on the Status of Women of resolution 36/5, which emphasized that mobilization of women was a crucial element in achieving the objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. The failure of policy makers to take gender fully into account in macro- and microeconomic planning had had a negative impact on women and had lessened the effectiveness of the policies themselves. That issue was particularly relevant in the Caribbean region, where women had traditionally performed a wide variety of functions in the labour force.

22. At the same time, the condition of women had largely been determined by economic factors at the national and international levels. In the Caribbean region, declining economic growth and a heavy debt burden had resulted in trade liberalization, fiscal restraint and a drastic reduction in social services. Adapting microeconomic policies to the fundamental changes at the international level had been a formidable challenge for the CARICOM States and, as first pointed out by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), women and children were shouldering a disproportionate share of the burden of structural adjustment.

/...

(Mrs. Mair, Jamaica)

23. The regional commissions had made significant contributions towards implementing the Forward-looking Strategies and should not be overlooked during the system-wide review of the United Nations. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) had focused on the most vulnerable population groups and on their role as agents in the development process. It had sought to create a framework for changing production patterns under conditions of social equity and, in that context, had stressed the need for access to education and knowledge. It was also working to develop youth services in low-income urban areas, stressing the democratic distribution of power within the family - an objective with positive implications for women. The Commission had recently emphasized the need to provide adequate resources for regional preparatory activities for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

24. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had identified the marginalization of women as a major aspect of the phenomenon of poverty and was working to help poor and vulnerable population groups gain access to resources and support institutions. A key principle underlying such activities was to encourage people to develop and to exert control over their lives; UNIFEM was performing a vital role in that regard. The CARICOM States had all benefited from UNIFEM efforts, and they joined in appealing for more resources for the Fund. They also appreciated the work of INSTRAW, in particular its assistance to ECLAC and its efforts to develop training materials to help integrate women in the development process.

25. Women had participated to an unprecedented degree in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and in the conference preparatory work. They had, for the most part, done so as representatives of non-governmental organizations, which had been among the most dynamic actors in the process. It was those women who had made sure that the links between women and the environment and between women and development had been acknowledged by the Conference. In addition, Agenda 21 had stressed that Governments must ensure the full implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies by the year 2000.

26. That holistic view of development led to the question of peace, which was a vital goal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. It also related fundamentally to the report of the Secretary-General entitled An Agenda for Peace, which identified economic despair, social injustice and political oppression as the causes of conflict. Unfortunately, women had been among the major recipients of such threats to security. That report also reinforced the moral guidelines for women's advancement by stressing that the goals of equality, development and peace were indivisible. However, the decision-making processes which threatened the achievement of those goals were mostly inaccessible to women. Sadly, the striking absence of women from public life and decision-making positions reflected the huge gap between rhetoric and reality. Serious attempts were being made to address that issue in the CARICOM region, with varying degrees of success.

/...

(Mrs. Mair, Jamaica)

27. On that same issue, the United Nations had a social responsibility to meet the mandated targets aimed at correcting the gross underrepresentation of women at senior levels in the Secretariat. While some progress had been made, the situation at high decision-making levels remained unacceptable. Intensified efforts by the United Nations administration and Member States were therefore required. She concluded by thanking the Government and people of China for offering to host the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

28. Ms. MANSARAY (Sierra Leone) said that, in Africa, 1992 had presented challenges for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) as a result of political upheavals and the ensuing hardships. UNIFEM had also focused on the plight of women refugees and the local impact of large influxes of refugees. Her delegation urged Member States to support UNIFEM so that it could continue to mobilize resources for the benefit of African women.

29. In Sierra Leone, the fact that full and equal rights for men and women were embodied in the Constitution had little real impact on women's lives. The participation of women in the socio-economic sector was limited by a number of factors. Most women were confined to low-skilled, low-paying jobs, and the traditionally strong emphasis placed on their reproductive role limited their ability to take advantage of education and training opportunities. In addition, they suffered from poor health as a result of repeated childbearing, poor nutrition and heavy domestic and economic responsibilities. Maternal, infant and child mortality rates all remained high. Experience had shown, however, that there was a strong positive correlation between education and the overall well-being and living standards of women and their families. In that respect, particular attention should be focused on rural women, who were generally the most deprived both economically and educationally. Land rights posed another serious problem for African women working in the agricultural sector: they seldom had title to land or access to credit, technology and other extension services, and their situation was further exacerbated by growing population pressures on the land.

30. Since the ratification by Sierra Leone of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, women had been encouraged to participate in public life. Their political awareness was being raised and various organizations were helping to promote women's issues. Nevertheless, women were often prevented from exercising their right of full involvement in political life or national development, either because of their unequal educational status or because of expectations related to their traditional family roles and responsibilities. Although progress had been made in some areas of the country, opportunities for women to enter politics needed a further boost. The virtual absence of women from decision-making positions meant that their role in policy formulation and implementation was absolutely minimal.

31. While the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies had been a major milestone in United Nations efforts to promote the advancement of women, much remained

(Ms. Mansaray, Sierra Leone)

to be done. That should not discourage increased efforts to remove the obstacles to their implementation in each country, however. Lastly, she commended the work done by UNICEF in Sierra Leone, particularly its highly effective immunization programmes and its efforts to advance the status of women. She urged other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to emulate its example.

32. Ms. AL-HAMAMI (Yemen) said that the new world order brought about by the end of the cold war presented new challenges which required that the international community act with the spirit of justice and responsibility enshrined in the principles of international law and in the Charter of the United Nations. Issues relating to socio-economic development should figure on the international agenda, for unless social and economic problems were solved, particularly in the developing countries, there could be no elimination of tension and conflict and no achievement of wider democracy and human rights.

33. The organic link between women and development was clearer than ever before. Her delegation commended the report of the Secretary-General on the advancement of women (A/47/377), particularly its proposal for increased support for women's associations, which would ultimately help women to acquire the skills and expertise they needed to participate more fully and actively in the development process. Her delegation believed that the international community should seize the opportunity provided by the new world order to further the advancement of women with a view to achieving their participation in development. In that context, it hoped that the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies would be achieved and would have positive repercussions on the lives of women, particularly in the developing countries. Similarly, the recommendations concerning women and the environment adopted at the United Conference on Environment and Development should be promptly implemented. Her Government wished to thank the Government of China for offering to host the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, which should address the neglected issue of rural women's rights.

34. The international community and international organizations should give more support to national human resources development in the developing countries: strengthening the role of women would help to combat ignorance and tackle the problems of health and housing. Meanwhile, eliminating discrimination against women still posed a challenge to the international community and international organizations. In the United Nations Secretariat, for instance, women should have equal opportunities with men to hold senior posts.

35. Her country's Constitution and legislation guaranteed full equality and employment rights to Yemeni women, some of whom held top positions in Parliament, in judicial bodies and in government institutions. Women were active in politics, trade unions and public life. However, the advancement of Yemeni women and their integration in the development process would fall short

/...

of the desired goals unless the international community increased its support for the Government's programmes, particularly those involving rural women, health care and housing. Lastly, she urged the international community and the relevant international organizations to pay more attention to the situation of women living under occupation or racist regimes, or in areas which had suffered natural or man-made disasters.

36. Mr. Krenkel (Austria) took the Chair.

37. Mr. BURCUOGLU (Turkey) said that his country would play an active role in preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women and was planning initiatives in that regard at both the national and the international level. It hoped that the Conference would give further impetus to the advancement of women and would promote their integration in development and their participation in the decision-making process. Turkey attached particular importance to efforts to eliminate violence against women and welcomed the progress made in preparing a draft declaration on that question. He hoped that the declaration would be adopted in 1993.

38. His country was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was a major legal instrument for establishing genuine equality between the sexes. Turkey was gratified to note the number of recent ratifications and urged States that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention in order to ensure its universality. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was playing a very useful role in promoting the adoption of anti-discriminatory legislation at the national level.

39. The gap between de jure and de facto equality persisted. Women were sometimes unaware of their rights and, when they were aware of them, often encountered difficulties in exercising them. Public information on the rights of women was therefore of decisive importance.

40. Turkey was making a consistent effort to overcome obstacles affecting women in the areas of education, employment and health. Ongoing projects focused on women living in rural areas and the least developed regions of the country. The access of girls and women to all levels of education and to vocational training and the participation of women in all areas of development as both beneficiaries and active agents had been established as guiding principles. A government department dealt exclusively with questions relating to women's employment. A job quota for disabled women had been set in all sectors. Turkey was also seeking to promote the role of women in public and political life and their participation in decision-making. A general directorate on the status of women was responsible for drawing up coherent national policies and mobilizing resources to ensure the effective integration of women in the development process. The directorate was also seeking to ensure higher levels of education for women, to increase their participation in the agricultural, industrial and service sectors and to provide legal, health and social protection for them.

(Mr. Burcuoglu, Turkey)

41. Referring to the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/47/508), he said that the increase in the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution must be maintained in order to achieve the 35 per cent target set for 1995. He noted with satisfaction the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001, which for the first time covered all aspects of the question.

42. Ms. DROZD (Belarus) said that her delegation attached particular importance to more effective involvement of women in the development process, with a view to achieving the goals of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Since women were responsible for key aspects of industrial and economic development, their broad participation in development promoted the advancement of women in society. Economic development did not automatically bring about an equal distribution of resources and women did not gain from the development process to the same extent as men. Disregarding the problems of women in economic policy had a disproportionately negative impact on the status of women and generally led to poverty, particularly in times of economic recession. That phenomenon was currently taking place in Belarus, where the situation of women had deteriorated catastrophically during the transition to a market economy. Women were among the most socially disadvantaged groups in society and were more severely affected by the problem of unemployment. The restructuring of the economy had reduced the number of jobs and sharply increased the number of job applicants. Single mothers, single women of retirement age and women engaged in part-time employment were among the thousands of people living near to or below the poverty level. More than 50 per cent of unemployed women had to care for one or two young children.

43. To cope with that complicated economic situation, her Government had planned a series of measures to improve the employment status of women by introducing flexible working hours and retraining schemes, particularly for women with children. Steps had also been taken to increase the participation of women in entrepreneurial activities. Much remained to be done and Belarus wished to learn about the experience of other countries in tackling those problems. The involvement of older women in the development process was an other important question, in view of the important contribution which they could make on the basis of their broad occupational and life experience.

44. Belarus supported the proposed agenda for the Fourth World Conference on Women contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/377). Nevertheless, in view of the fact that one main objective of the Conference was to evaluate the progress made in enhancing the status of women and to mobilize women to achieve that goal, she felt it would be useful to include the question of women and development on the agenda. As part of preparations for the Conference, her Government planned to hold in 1993, within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States, a conference on problems related to improving the status of women.

/...

45. Ms. ENKHTSETSEG (Mongolia) said that the ongoing implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies had helped create much needed awareness by women of their rights. At its next session, the Commission on the Status of Women should consider issues related to legal literacy and women in extreme poverty as priority themes. The main objectives of the Strategies were as relevant as ever. The Fourth World Conference on Women would provide fresh impetus to the implementation of the Strategies, and preparatory activities at the national and regional level were of vital importance for its success. Governments should establish national committees or focal points to serve as catalysts for preparations by initiating, organizing and coordinating national activities relating to the Conference. Her delegation favoured active involvement by non-governmental organizations in both the preparatory activities and the Conference itself. Mongolia urged those countries which had not yet done so to become parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

46. Her delegation highly commended the work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which served as an important catalyst for innovative projects on behalf of women. UNIFEM was providing support to the Mongolian Women's Federation in a pilot project for needy women. Her Government was seeking to improve the situation of women to the extent possible under current economic conditions and to enable them to participate actively in all spheres of social life. Although equal rights for women were guaranteed under Mongolian legislation, much remained to be done to achieve equality in practice. Despite the difficult economic situation facing the country, her Government wished to reaffirm its commitment to take every possible step to ensure the advancement of women in Mongolia.

47. Ms. NEELS (Namibia) said that the establishment of women's organizations following Namibia's independence had been an important part of national efforts to improve the situation of women. The Namibian Constitution prohibited discrimination based on sex and protected women's rights as individuals and within the family. The Department of Women's Affairs of the Office of the President sought to promote awareness and involvement on the part of Government ministries, non-governmental organizations and women from all walks of life. The Department had conducted training workshops in small-business management to assist income-generating projects run by women, in order to make women self-sufficient. Its staff members had attended training courses to learn strategies for integrating women in all spheres of development. The Government had also embarked on a national literacy programme which included gender-related training for literacy promoters in order to respond to the specific needs of women.

48. The recently enacted Local Government Act stipulated that at least 40 per cent of representatives on local and regional councils must be women, thereby promoting their participation in the decision-making process. Her Government was preparing to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. In view of the Convention's importance, the Department of Women's Affairs had published it in booklet form

/...

(Ms. Neels, Namibia)

and was conducting workshops in all regions of the country to make women aware of their rights. That effort would not have been possible without the staunch support of UNICEF.

49. The Department of Women's Affairs had forged links with community-based groups to deal with the problem of violence against women. Her Government supported the proposal for a declaration on violence against women. Namibian women had established organizations and unions to find solutions to their problems. The Namibia National Women's Organization, a non-political umbrella organization, had been set up and various credit unions, trade unions and student organizations were actively involved in improving the living standards of women. Generous assistance from international organizations, especially the various United Nations agencies involved, had made it possible to achieve considerable progress in that field. Lastly, her delegation welcomed the upcoming Fourth World Conference on Women and hoped that it would highlight the situation of rural women in development.

AGENDA ITEM 93: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/C.3/47/L.11, L.13, L.15 and L.17)

(b) CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/C.3/47/L.14 and L.16)

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.11

50. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.11 on policies and programmes on youth, said that the draft resolution was in line with recent developments in international cooperation on youth welfare and was sufficiently balanced and objective to permit a consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.13

51. Mrs. TAVARES DE ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.13 on the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, said that the Bahamas, Chile, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Mali, Panama, Paraguay, Senegal and Suriname had become sponsors. The main purpose of the draft resolution was to endorse the global targets on ageing for the year 2001 contained in document A/47/339. The targets provided a pragmatic focus for achieving the goals of the International Plan of Action and would help accelerate its implementation. Other recommendations contained in the draft resolution would facilitate the integration of older persons into existing programmes and activities. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

/...

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.15

52. Ms. LIMJUCO (Philippines) made the following revisions to draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.15 on persons with disabilities: in the sixth preambular paragraph, the words "during the Decade" should be deleted; in paragraph 3 (b), the words "and providing preventive and rehabilitative measures and an equalization of opportunities" should be added after the words "socio-economic issues"; in paragraph 8 (e), the words "revision of the" should be added after the words "Finalizing the"; in paragraph 8 (h), the words "in close collaboration with UNOV/CSDHA" should be added after the word "Division"; and in paragraph 11, the words "decides to continue, in response to General Assembly resolution 46/91 and Economic and Social Council decision 1992/276, the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability and" should be added in the first line before the word "Encourages" and in the second line of the same paragraph the words "Voluntary" and "on Disability" should be deleted. The following countries had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Australia, Costa Rica, Greece, Iceland, Japan, Mali, Mongolia, Norway, Panama, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Trinidad and Tobago and Turkey.

53. The draft resolution drew attention to the increasing number of persons with disabilities and requested the Secretary-General to redirect the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons from awareness-raising to action and to provide it with adequate funding from external sources. She hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.17

54. Ms. ENKHTSETSEG (Mongolia), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.17 on the role of cooperatives, announced that Belarus, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Kenya, Micronesia and the Philippines had become sponsors. The draft resolution drew attention to the centenary, in 1995, of the establishment of the International Cooperative Alliance and welcomed the idea of observing an international day of cooperatives. It encouraged Governments to consider the potential of cooperatives for contributing to the solution of economic, social and environmental problems in formulating national development strategies.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.14

55. Mr. TSEPOV (Russian Federation), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.14 on international cooperation in combating organized crime, said that Trinidad and Tobago had become a sponsor and that Colombia had ceased to be a sponsor. The draft resolution reaffirmed that priority must be given to the struggle against all activities of organized crime, urged Member States to give favourable consideration to the implementation of the Guidelines for the prevention and control of organized crime and requested the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to continue to consider ways of strengthening international cooperation in combating organized crime. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

/...

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.16

56. Mr. OULD MOHAMED LEMINE (Mauritania) introduced, on behalf of the Group of African States, draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.16 on the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The draft resolution expressed appreciation to those Governments and intergovernmental organizations that had supported the Institute and called for increased resources to be allocated to it to enable the Institute to carry out all its mandates. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
23rd meeting
held on
Friday, 30 October 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KRENKEL (Austria)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 93: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(b) CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/47/SR.23
24 November 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

/...

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/47/38, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/88-S/23563, A/47/340, 368, 377, 391, 508 and 564)

1. Mr. OULD MOHAMED LEMINE (Mauritania) recalled that the United Nations had, since its establishment, recognized the importance of the role of women and had in its Charter affirmed the equal rights of men and women. All the international human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations also emphasized the equality of the sexes. Thanks to the many activities undertaken by the Organization and the untiring efforts by those of its bodies dealing with the status of women, there was a heightened awareness of the issue worldwide. It was now unanimously recognized that it was imperative to ensure the participation of women in all spheres of life. There was a debate only about the best ways of hastening the implementation of the various strategies devised to benefit women.

2. The main obstacle to the emancipation of women was, without question, their lack of education and training. It was clear that society as a whole could only gain by educating women because, through each woman, a family was being educated, and new energies were being released to do battle for economic and social development.

3. The status of women in the developing countries had greatly deteriorated in recent years because of the economic recession, the growing debt burden and the reduction of social expenditure as a consequence of the structural adjustment programmes that had been instituted. In countries like Mauritania, where women had always enjoyed the same rights as men, women often found themselves, as a result of social upheavals, in the position of being heads of household at a time when the means of subsistence were growing scarce. The international community had a duty to pay serious attention to the condition of hundreds of millions of women who were in that situation and to act before they gave way to despair.

4. According to the available statistics, women represented one third of the workforce, but this percentage was misleading because often the official data did not take into account the informal sector. Still, the fact that women accounted for more than half the production of foodstuffs, as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) indicated, was proof that women were already at the heart of the process of development. To invest in women was not only to make reparation for an injustice; it was to act in a way that could only benefit the economy as a whole.

5. In Mauritania, the Government was convinced that no development effort could succeed without the full participation of all women. A ministerial department responsible for the status of women, whose director was a woman, applied the Government's policy for the emancipation of women, while an interministerial technical committee was responsible for monitoring activities for the advancement of women. The goals to be achieved were the following:

/...

(Mr. Ould Mohamed Lemine, Mauritania)

to promote the education and training of women; to encourage them to participate in social and economic activities; to ensure the legal and social protection of women; to set up support structures for women at all levels; and to improve the living conditions of women, especially in rural areas.

6. Mauritanian women currently participated in all sectors of the life of the country. Women's cooperatives were springing up everywhere and there were particularly large numbers of women in the teaching field. Lastly, a code regulating family life on a stable basis was currently under study.

7. Yet it was at the global level that action had to be taken to remove the obstacles that stood in the way of hundreds of millions of women throughout the world. That was the challenge that the fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 would have to face.

8. Ms. FROGN SELLAEG (Norway), speaking on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden as well as her own country, said that the Nordic countries viewed the fourth World Conference on Women as an opportunity for all Member States to demonstrate their political will to re-establish the advancement of women as a global priority. The Nordic countries attached great importance to the full involvement of non-governmental organizations in the preparations for the Conference and welcomed the offer made by the host Government to all interested non-governmental organizations and individuals to attend the NGO Forum which would take place in Beijing before and during the Conference. Non-governmental organizations in the Nordic countries had high expectations for the 1995 Conference and many had begun their preparations. In 1994, a Nordic Forum, in which women from the Baltic countries would participate, would be held in Finland.

9. The preparations for the Conference were as important as the Conference itself. The Nordic countries hoped that the Secretary-General would soon appoint a woman with international stature in relation to the advancement of women and with experience of the United Nations system, to be the Secretary-General for the Conference, in accordance with resolution 36/8 A of the Commission on the Status of Women.

10. The Nordic countries were strong believers in international cooperation for the empowerment of women worldwide. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was central in that regard. Although 119 States had already ratified or acceded to the Convention, the many reservations accompanying the ratifications undermined its very foundations. The Nordic countries urged the States which had formulated reservations to consider withdrawing them.

11. Given the growing number of States parties to the Convention, the Nordic countries believed that the session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) should be extended so that it could make

/...

(Ms. Frogn Sellaeg, Norway)

up the backlog in its consideration of the reports of States parties. Lastly, the Nordic delegations supported the steps taken by the Commission on the Status of Women to strengthen its activities and they would continue to contribute to the improvement of existing mechanisms.

12. At the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights an attempt must be made to stop considering women's rights as separate from human rights. The Nordic countries believed that human rights applied equally to men and women, and did so in all fields.

13. Women must participate in decision-making at all levels, and the United Nations had a key role to play in their empowerment. It was more urgent than ever that women should influence decisions concerning the future of humanity being taken at the international level. Therefore, the issue of gender disparity should be considered by the various United Nations bodies and, in particular, should receive special attention from the Economic and Social Council in 1993.

14. The development of effective measures to combat violence against women in all its forms was an absolute necessity, since it impeded the enjoyment of their fundamental rights.

15. At a time when the whole world faced an economic crisis, the structural adjustment that the crisis imposed on countries could only be effective, as recognized in the report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with the participation of women. The Nordic countries emphasized the importance of educating girls and women, clearly recognized by the World Bank. Educating women reduced the number of births and maternal and child mortality, and helped to prevent the spread of AIDS. The Nordic countries strongly supported the views of the World Bank on that issue.

16. Sustainable economic growth and improvement in the quality of life, especially in developing countries, were goals that could only be achieved with the participation of women at all levels. An entire chapter of Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio was devoted to the participation of women in promoting sustainable development. The Nordic countries believed that the General Assembly should examine ways of enhancing the participation of women in the Conference follow-up.

17. Peace was one of the themes of the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in 1995. As the number of United Nations peace-keeping operations increased, Member States should consider increasing the number of women participating in such operations, currently still quite small.

18. Finally, the Nordic countries noted with concern that efforts to achieve the goals set by the General Assembly regarding the number of women in the United Nations Secretariat were proceeding very slowly. They attached great

/...

(Ms. Frogn Sellaeg, Norway)

importance to that issue, especially the need to increase the number of women at the higher levels, and they hoped that the Secretariat was taking action in that regard.

19. Although the Nordic countries had achieved the highest percentage of women in government, nevertheless, they felt it necessary to strengthen their efforts to increase women's participation in decision-making, especially in economic areas, where there were still few women.

20. Mr. RAHMAN (Pakistan) recalled that the United Nations Charter, which affirmed equal rights of men and women, had been adopted at a time when only 31 countries gave women the right to vote. Since then, the international community had undertaken numerous activities which had helped to improve the status of women at every level and to focus attention on their living conditions and their contribution to development. Women could no longer be marginalized in development and the political process. The movement for the advancement of women was not new. Examples could be found in Greek classics: Plato, in his Republic, had already recommended the abolition of social roles based on sex. In more recent times, the English philosopher John Stuart Mill and the Norwegian playwright Ibsen had made a case for the emancipation of women.

21. Currently, poverty and illiteracy mainly affected women, especially in developing countries. Paradoxically, women contributed between 50 and 80 per cent of food production and ran close to 70 per cent of small enterprises. In many cases, women's work remained invisible because it was not included in national accounting. Inadequate data no doubt explained flawed policies.

22. It was essential to create socio-economic conditions conducive to the greater participation of women in economic decision-making. They must be guaranteed equal employment opportunities, and services must be developed to reduce women's child-care responsibilities. Training programmes specifically for women living in extreme poverty must be created, and their paid and unpaid work must be included in national accounting statistics.

23. The participation of women in political life was extremely low worldwide, since, according to statistics, there were barely 10 per cent of women in national parliaments and only 3.5 per cent at the ministerial level. A very large number of countries had no women ministers. In 1988, the General Assembly had called on Member States to establish specific targets to increase the number of women in decision-making positions. In 1990, the Commission on the Status of Women had urged the participation of women in politics at the highest level. His delegation looked forward to the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, which would consider the first draft of the Platform for Action to be submitted by the Secretary-General for the fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in China in 1995.

/...

(Mr. Rahman, Pakistan)

24. Investing in women would not resolve all the problems related to development but it would make a contribution. Literacy among women equalled educating mothers and resulted in an investment in the future of mankind. Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment Development recognized, in its Principle 20, that women had a vital role in environmental management and development. That was particularly true in developing countries, where women were the first to be affected by environmental degradation.

25. In Pakistan, the Government considered the integration of women into national development imperative. A ministry had been established for that purpose which undertook programmes for the advancement of women in many sectors. The Government had also established a bank managed exclusively by women for the purpose of creating jobs for women. In the civil service, 5 per cent of posts had been set aside for women, who could also apply for other positions.

26. The Pakistani Commission on the Status Women had been created in 1984 to determine the rights and responsibilities of women in Islamic society and to make recommendations with the aim of meeting their needs in the fields of education, health and employment opportunities; to identify services which women could render to society; and to suggest measures to integrate women from minority communities into national life.

27. Lastly, the Government of Pakistan, fully cognizant of the important role played by non-governmental organizations in the advancement of women, provided financial support for NGOs and commended them for their work.

28. Mr. GOSHU (Ethiopia) said that there had been no significant breakthrough as far as changes in the role of women were concerned. A few isolated electoral victories or appointments of women to positions of leadership were not sufficient to change the status quo, which was generally male-dominated.

29. After describing the living conditions of Ethiopian women - who represented 50 per cent of the population of Ethiopia - he enumerated the wide array of responsibilities borne by Ethiopian women, which required them to work, on average, 16 hours a day. Women had only limited access to education, health care and employment. They were at once responsible for the survival and the well-being of children and families, and therefore were particularly affected by environmental degradation, food shortages, poor hygiene and limited access to family planning services. Because of those conditions, it was impossible for them to participate in social development tasks or even to obtain the most basic education; that prevented them from attaining administrative and managerial positions in the public and private sectors.

30. Only recently had efforts been made to create the organizational machinery to address women's concerns. For example, a women's unit had been created in the Ministry of Agriculture to conduct development programmes for

/...

(Mr. Goshu, Ethiopia)

rural women. Its focus was mainly on income-generating activities and on providing women with appropriate technologies to lessen their burdens at home and on the farm. For its part, the Ethiopian Nutrition Institute had launched a training programme for women in the areas of nutrition science and the feeding of children.

31. The Centre for Research, Training and Information for Women in Development established recently under the auspices of Addis Ababa University was conducting research on issues regarding women; collecting data on the participation of women in development, and disseminating ideas and information to assist the Government in the formulation of policies for women.

32. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had also been carrying out a number of programmes for women, but a lack of both strategies and well-defined priorities had significantly undermined coordination, leading to duplication of efforts.

33. A national plan of action for women and children for the period 1990 to 2000 was being prepared. It aimed to provide basic social services, primary health care, access to education, water supplies and sanitation, with the goal of creating the conditions in which the lives of women could be improved. In addition, the Ethiopian Government had been taking steps to ensure that women were able to take their proper place in national life; there was already a significant representation of women in the highest echelons of the State as well as in ambassadorial roles. Lastly, the Ethiopian Government was prepared to participate fully and actively in the World Conference on Women, which was to take place in Beijing in 1995, as well as the World Conference on Human Rights scheduled for 1993, where women's issues were expected to figure prominently.

34. Miss BURLACU (Romania) said that the high-priority themes of the Commission on the Status of Women were also topics of high priority for her country. Romania had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1982, and in 1990 had withdrawn the reservation which it had formulated concerning article 29, paragraph 1, on the settlement of any dispute concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention.

35. The Romanian legal system provided women with the means to participate in all of the country's recently created democratic institutions. The new Romanian constitution, which had entered into force on 8 December 1991, guaranteed equal rights for all citizens including the exercise of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights by all citizens without discrimination. In addition, the Family Code, Labour Code and other legal instruments which had been amended after December 1989 included provisions specifically protecting the rights of women.

/...

(Miss Burlacu, Romania)

36. Of course, in practice, many problems remained to be solved. However, women were in the majority - and had even reached high levels of qualification - in activities related to health (75 per cent), education (69 per cent), justice (46 per cent), and business, including new private enterprises owned or managed by women (65 per cent). Nevertheless, women should participate even more in decision making and it was to be hoped that they would be better represented in the new government that was about to be formed.

37. Since one of the obstacles to eliminating de facto discrimination against women was that most women and men were not aware of women's legal rights or did not fully understand the legal and administrative measures by which those rights could be exercised, several Romanian non-governmental organizations were active in making those systems known. That was why Romania supported the idea that eradication of poverty was a precondition for the creation of conditions of true liberty, democracy and equality.

38. In that connection, there was no escaping the fact that, while the market economy could provide new opportunities, it could also maintain or even exacerbate existing inequalities, or even create new ones. As a country in transition, Romania was facing unemployment, which particularly affected women. That was why it was important for social policies to ensure the participation of women in all economic, social and political activities.

39. Romania welcomed Agenda 21, which acknowledged the role of women in environmental management as well as the contribution women could make to averting the threat to the planet of environmental degradation.

40. In other respects, it was clear that existing structures and mechanisms made no provision for proper articulation of women's views on global issues. In that regard, the importance of women's participation in such areas as the peace process and bilateral and multilateral negotiations, disarmament and international cooperation was insufficiently recognized.

41. Her delegation hoped that the forthcoming World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in September 1995 on the theme: "Action for Equality, Development and Peace" would present an opportunity for the United Nations to impart new momentum to actions for the advancement of women at national, regional and international levels.

42. Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand) speaking on behalf of the Governments of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, said that on the issue of the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, the Charter was very clear: "The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs". The credibility of the Organization was at stake.

/...

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

43. Yet significant underrepresentation of women in the Secretariat continued. The three Governments on whose behalf he was speaking had consistently urged the United Nations to rectify that deplorable situation so that it could properly reflect in its own composition the principles of equal opportunity it sought to promote globally.

44. With regard to the targets to be achieved by 1995, of an overall participation rate of 35 per cent of women in posts subject to geographical distribution, and a participation rate of 25 per cent of women in posts at the D-1 level and above, it must be recognized that, while there had been some increase in the number of women at the lower Professional levels, the increase was far from sufficient for the achievement by 1995 of an overall participation rate of 35 per cent. Between June 1991 and June 1992, the percentage of women in the Secretariat in posts subject to geographical distribution had risen by just 1.4 percentage points, from 29.2 to 30.6 per cent. To reach the 35 per cent target by 1995, the United Nations would require an annual increase of around twice the present rate of women occupying posts in that category. In addition, women were practically unrepresented in the most senior echelons. While the total number of women in posts at the D-1 level had increased, although only marginally, there had been no increase in the number of women at the D-2 level over the previous year; moreover, there were no women Under-Secretaries-General, and the one woman Assistant Secretary-General was scheduled to leave her post by March 1993. If the 25 per cent target for women in the higher echelons in the Secretariat was to be reached by 1995, an annual rate of increase of around 7.3 per cent was urgently required.

45. Clearly, the initiative in recruiting women into the Secretariat from underrepresented countries must, in the last analysis, be taken by Member States, which must ensure that women were considered for vacancies. But the Organization must take additional measures to eliminate obstacles to the advancement of women within the Secretariat. It was disappointing to note, as the Canadian consultant had done in the report she had been asked to prepare on the issue, that many of the obstacles identified in 1985 had still not been eliminated. It was the Secretary-General's responsibility to use his authority to take action to make all staff aware of the problem of sexual equality. One particularly pernicious form of sex-based discrimination was sexual harassment, which was faced by women the world over but which must be completely banished from the United Nations and its Secretariat, lest it tarnish their image. The United Nations must take swift action to deal firmly with cases of sexual harassment by all persons employed in the United Nations system in any capacity, and the Secretary-General must make the procedures widely known.

46. The Australian, Canadian and New Zealand delegations welcomed the Action Programme contained in the Secretary-General's report, which, appropriately, focused on coordination of recruitment, placement and promotion, the accountability of managers for achieving targets, and career development.

/...

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

They also expected clear and constant indications from the Secretariat that the advancement of women remained of the highest priority for the Organization.

47. The Secretary-General must also ensure that the current reform of the United Nations did not work to the detriment of women, as seemed to be the case. The establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development provided another opportunity for the Secretary-General to address seriously the gender imbalance in the Secretariat. The three delegations for which he was speaking had in past years urged the United Nations to create an equal employment opportunities unit, outside the Office of Human Resources Management, with the capacity to exercise authority over all personnel decisions. The Secretary-General should establish such a unit, mention of which had been omitted from his report.

48. The report contained some encouraging elements, in particular the fact that there had been a slight increase in the level of recruitment and promotion of women in the Secretariat. Much more was required, however, if the United Nations was to set an example to the international community on issues relating to the rights of women. That example must come from the top of the Secretariat. Only then would it be possible to achieve the targets set by the General Assembly.

49. Mrs. SUVARNATEMEE (Thailand) said that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was a milestone in the quest to promote equal rights between men and women. Her delegation urged the many countries which had not yet acceded to the Convention to do so. For its part, Thailand had acceded to the Convention in 1985 with seven reservations. In 1991 the Thai Government had withdrawn two of those reservations, namely those relating to article 11, paragraph 1 (b), on the right to the same employment opportunities, and article 15, paragraph 3, on the nullification of contracts restricting the legal capacity of women. The Government had in 1992 decided to withdraw its reservation relating to article 9, paragraph 2, on the right of nationality. The Thai law of nationality had also been amended to allow children born of Thai women to acquire Thai nationality on the basis of equality between men and women.

50. Like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies sought the advancement of women in society. However, during the past few years, it seemed as though the implementation of the Strategies had slackened and, in 1990, the first review of their implementation by the Commission on the Status of Women had made it clear that numerous obstacles to the advancement of women still existed. It was therefore crucial that all concerned should redouble their efforts at all levels in order to achieve the objectives of the Strategies. In that context, the convening of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 would provide a good opportunity to review the progress made and would help in the formulation of clear and specific guidelines. Thailand was prepared to participate actively in the entire preparatory process for the World

(Mrs. Suvarnatemee, Thailand)

Conference and also in the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Conference on Women and Development, to be held in Indonesia in 1994.

51. Recognizing the need to integrate questions relating to women into national development plans, Thailand had established a National Commission on Women's Affairs, which had been extremely active. The Commission had drawn up a long-term plan for the advancement of women. It had incorporated its planned activities into the seventh Five-Year National Economic and Social Development Plan for the period 1992-1997. In addition, taking advantage of the Government's proclamation of 1992 as Thai Women's Year, the Commission had revised many laws, rules and regulations. It had also recently organized, within the framework of its campaign to involve women in political life and to promote their rights in that regard, a two-day seminar for 800 female district chiefs and village heads. The Commission was also currently preparing a translation of the publications entitled The World's Women 1970-1990 and Women: Challenges to the Year 2000, which it would disseminate to all women throughout the country.

52. The advancement of women owed much to the United Nations and other international organizations and agencies. In that connection, her delegation wished to pay tribute to UNIFEM, which had always acted as an advocate for the cause of women and promoted their role in the developing countries, and to such other bodies as the Commission on the Status of Women, INSTRAW, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, WFP and FAO, which were jointly endeavouring to enhance the status of women in their technical cooperation activities.

53. Mr. KASOULIDES (Cyprus) said that discrimination against women was still prevalent throughout the world, even in the most economically developed countries. He urged all States that had not yet done so to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was a major legal instrument in that area.

54. His delegation was pleased to note that efforts had been made to coordinate follow-up activities in implementing the Convention with those relating to other instruments concerning human rights, in order to avoid duplication and overlapping. It would be helpful to adopt a single procedure for reporting on the implementation of those instruments at the national level, since that would simplify the task of small States which found it increasingly difficult to abide by their contractual obligations.

55. As could be seen from the Secretary-General's report in document A/47/508 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/14, the status of women in the Secretariat remained a matter of concern. The United Nations should set an example and redouble its efforts to implement the relevant resolutions. His delegation regretted that the organization of briefings for the regional groups, which had been decided upon the previous year, had still not been institutionalized, since such briefings would enhance public awareness of the issue and would help to speed up the attainment of the targets.

/...

(Mr. Kasoulides, Cyprus)

56. With regard to the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's report (A/37/377) and, in particular, the efforts made to find solutions to the problem of violence against women in all its forms and to strengthen the assistance given to women who were the victims of violence. It looked forward to the report of the Working Group of the Commission on the Status of Women, which was to contain a draft declaration on violence against women, and it hoped that the draft declaration would be approved at the next session of the Commission and adopted by the General Assembly in 1993.

57. Referring to the instruments relating to women's rights, he said that Cyprus had ratified not only the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, but also a number of international instruments which included provisions concerning the equality of rights of men and women, such as the European Social Charter, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

58. The struggle to ensure that women enjoyed the same rights as men and were able to participate fully in decision-making at all levels had been marked by some progress in recent years. That progress, which had been slow but steady, was due to the fact that the issue of discrimination against women was dealt with more openly and that all its aspects were debated in public. Against that background, his delegation welcomed the convening of a World Conference on Women in 1995. In that connection, his delegation noted that the preparatory meetings for the Conference should serve not only to prepare for the Conference itself, but also to encourage the implementation of measures already adopted and to continue to identify various facets of discrimination against women. In addition, Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/20 should be implemented: in that resolution the Council had requested the Commission on the Status of Women to establish, during its thirty-seventh session, an open-ended working group to consider the Commission's contribution to the World Conference. His delegation considered that the success of the Conference would depend on the active participation of women's non-governmental organizations at all stages of the preparation and holding of the Conference, and it accordingly welcomed the adoption by the Commission on the Status of Women of its resolution 36/8, in which it recommended that NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council should be allowed unrestricted access to participate in the World Conference.

59. For historical reasons, Cyprus had always attached great importance to complete equality between men and women. In that connection, he recalled that, since its foundation in 1960, the Republic of Cyprus had achieved rapid modernization by relying on the resourcefulness of all its citizens and that, in addition, Cypriot women had set an example during the tragic events which had led to the partition of the country. In particular, he drew attention to the case of the displaced women who had kept their families together and who had worked in industry, the services and agriculture and had organized peace

(Mr. Kasoulides, Cyprus)

marches along the green line, thus demonstrating that the future of Cyprus lay in the reconciliation and peaceful coexistence of the two Cypriot communities, without external interference.

60. In conclusion, he said that the Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolution 36/8, had requested that priority be given to the situation of rural women. Cyprus had organized a number of seminars and meetings on that issue. In addition, legislation had been prepared on such matters as equal pay for men and women, social security, the legal status of children born out of wedlock and day-care for the children of working mothers.

61. Mr. SOH (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation welcomed the increase in the number of States acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which the Republic of Korea had ratified in 1984. His delegation hoped that the question of women would receive the attention it deserved at the World Conference on Human Rights and that the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women would provide an opportunity to enhance the awareness of Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of women's issues. In that connection, his delegation supported the decision by the Commission on the Status of Women to incorporate the preparations for the Conference into its regular work programme. It would also be desirable if non-governmental organizations were to contribute to the preparatory phase of the Conference in order to ensure the success of the NGO Forum to be held at the same time. His delegation considered that the duration of the annual session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should be extended to three weeks, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/17.

62. General recommendation 19, in the report of the Committee (A/47/38), represented a promising step forward in that it detailed the measures necessary to combat violence against women. It was to be hoped that the draft declaration on violence against women, which precisely defined that form of violence, would receive ample consideration during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

63. The Republic of Korea had adopted various measures to protect women, such as the provision of shelters for battered women or the mandatory establishment of consultation services for women at workplaces with over 100 female workers. The Government had endeavoured to eliminate gender discrimination present in earlier legal instruments. The legal status of married women had been reviewed; in case of divorce, women could now claim a share of the couple's property, based on their non-financial contribution to the household, and they could obtain custody of the children on an equal footing with husbands, to whom custody had previously been automatically awarded. The Equal Employment Act, which provided legal guarantees for the right of women to work and protection for pregnant women, had been strengthened. However, as the report on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Promotion of Women to the Year 2000 (A/47/377) emphasized de jure equality

(Mr. Soh, Republic of Korea)

was but a first step towards de facto equality. Women needed to be cognizant of the rights and remedies available to them. Women's organizations could play an instrumental role in that regard, particularly in rural and remote areas.

64. His delegation was pleased to see that poverty reduction and women's role in that process was one of the priority themes for the forthcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Accordingly, the Government of the Republic of Korea had supported resolutions 36/3 and 36/5 of the Commission. The first of them underlined the fact that without women's full participation in every sector of society true democracy was impossible. The second urged Governments to draw up development programmes which took greater account of the capacities of women.

65. Since 1987, the five-year socio-economic development plan had contained a separate section on women. The development plan for 1992-1996 placed special emphasis on education, employment and the welfare of women. It aimed at eliminating discriminatory aspects of school curricula that affected girls, to development vocational training for women, especially in the sphere of advanced technology, and establishing new child-care services as well as a women's welfare service delivery system. As national efforts could not suffice, his delegation appreciated the efforts of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) which, by voicing the concerns and needs of women and by endeavouring to establish a link between women at the micro-level and macro-policy-making, had permitted women to make themselves heard. In May 1992, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women had participated in organizing, in Seoul, a workshop which had focused particularly on the importance of women's contribution to the informal sector.

66. Within the Secretariat of the United Nations itself, efforts should be continued to achieve the target of 35 per cent of women in posts subject to geographical distribution by 1995. The Organization should also endeavour to transform the attitudes and values of society, as they frequently constituted obstacles to reducing inequality between men and women.

67. Mrs. SILVA (Chile) said that since it had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1989, Chile had based its action for the advancement of women on the principles set out in the Convention. Accordingly, the democratic Government had established the National Women's Service (SERNAM) whose task was to ensure that the needs of women were taken into account in Government policies and plans. The Service had implemented projects and programmes designed to promote the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, as well as plans to assist low-income women, to prevent violence in families and to develop education, especially in low-income sectors, particularly with a view to reducing pregnancies among adolescents. Simultaneously, the National Women s Service had analysed Government policies towards women, especially with regard to hygiene at work,

(Mrs. Silva, Chile)

housing and employment; it had also disseminated written and audiovisual material to promote awareness of women's problems. In the legal sphere, reforms had been proposed in respect of labour law and civil and criminal law. In addition, an information and dissemination centre for women's rights had been set up in order to help to familiarize them with their legally recognized rights.

68. Although Chile was endeavouring to eliminate discrimination against women, there were still numerous obstacles; in order to overcome them, measures to promote equality of opportunity would have to be adopted. Although legal measures had been taken to ensure the equality of women before the law, de facto discrimination persisted. In view of that situation, Chile fully supported the principles set out in the report of the Secretary-General considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-sixth session, regarding the legitimacy, as recognized by article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, of adopting special measures on behalf of women in order to eliminate de jure and de facto discrimination affecting them. In that connection, it was vital to set in motion machinery to provide information on and disseminate the rights of women, and to organize introductory campaigns to elementary legal concepts.

69. Her delegation believed that the recommendations and conclusions made by the Commission on the Status of Women, whose task was to oversee the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, constituted an essential document in so far as they proposed measures to be taken by Governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as United Nations bodies.

70. In conformity with those recommendations, Chile undertook to speed up the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Thus, with regard to equality, it was essential to eliminate de jure and de facto discrimination against women and to increase the number of women in decision-making positions. With regard to development, Chile was aware that the advancement of women and development went hand in hand and that it was consequently the participation of women in development must be strengthened by giving priority to women living in extreme poverty. Lastly, with regard to peace, Chile was convinced that, just like men, women should contribute to peace, which implied their participation in decisions concerning conflicts, be they international, regional or national.

AGENDA ITEM 93: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(b) CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.19*

71. Mr. FERRARIN (Italy) introduced the draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/47/L.19*, on behalf of the countries whose names appeared on the document, together with the Bahamas, Belarus, Croatia, Hungary, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

72. The Ministerial Meeting held at Versailles in November 1991 had led to an effective United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme which had promptly been adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 46/152. Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.19* was designed to secure the achievements made: the intergovernmental Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had, at its very first meeting, reached a consensus on the various questions submitted to it and had been able to define a platform which would allow it to direct its future action. It was also designed, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/22, paragraph 2, and General Assembly resolution 46/152, to support the process of strengthening United Nations activities in respect of crime prevention. In his report (A/47/399, paras. 76-79), the Secretary-General drew attention to the urgent need to enhance the institutional capacity of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme. Paragraphs 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the draft confirmed that need. As the draft resolution was basically a follow-up text, its sponsors hoped that it would be possible to adopt it by consensus.

The meeting rose at noon.